Women Were Not Expected

BY

MARJORIE PETO
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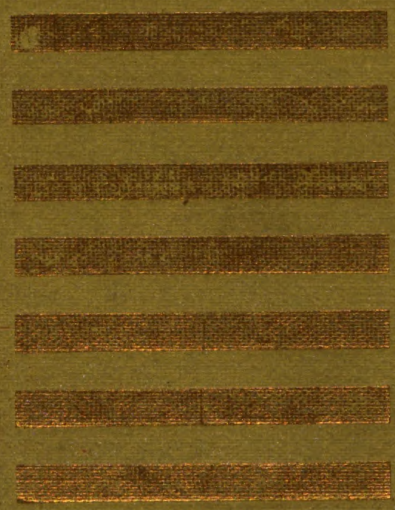

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2nd GENERAL HOSPITAL, OXFORD

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Women Were Not Expected

LT. COL. MARJORIE PETO, A.N.C.

An Informal Story of the Nurses of
2nd General Hospital in the ETO

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR
AT 1293 SUSSEX ROAD
WEST ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY

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INTRODUCTION:

To the nurses who served with me in the European Theater of Operations during World War II, this volume is reminiscently and affectionately dedicated.

Presbyterian Hospital, of the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City, inaugurated a Unit which formed the nucleus of an organization which became the 2nd General Hospital, U. S. Army. A formal and complete record of its military and professional activities, from activation on January 31, 1942, to demobilization on October 12, 1945, has been written and sent to Washington. After the Unit had returned home a "Certificate of Appreciation" was sent to Mr. Cooper, President of Presbyterian Hospital, from the office of the Surgeon General and signed by Major General Norman T. Kirk, which extolled in detail the "experience, skill and loyalty" of the Unit and paid tribute to its "outstanding contribution to the successful prosecution of World War II under circumstances never before encountered in the long history of conflicts." All the officers, nurses and the enlisted personnel that comprised 2nd General Hospital were proud to have earned it!

In this story it has been my endeavor to recapture some of our more light-hearted moments—the immaterial, gay, madcap antics which relieved the monotony of army hurry-up-and-wait or which served to relax nerves tautened by work, heartbreak or simple homesickness. Please let no reader be deceived into thinking he detects a flippant attitude in nurses toward duty; all nurses in the Army Nurse Corps were volunteers who knew that nursing in wartime was a tough, grim job to be tackled seriously and earnestly. The young women in our group had been expertly trained; many of them were specialists in orthopedics, anesthesia and operating room techniques but their knowledge of military proceedures was deplorably nil. Nor were we destined to benefit by any systematic training or any effective hardening-up exercise before we embarked for destination unknown. We were to learn though, the hard way.

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2nd General Hospital was singularly fortunate in its Commanding Officer, Col. Paul M. Crawford, a man with 27 years experience in the Army and an officer who had served in World War I. Doctors, nurses and the enlisted personnel developed confidence in him, held him in respect and even deep affection. I think he was disconcerted when first he realized his command included approximately 125 women; at our first conference he informed me sternly that he was an officer who *never* changed his mind and I am sure that to the end of his association with our group three years later he firmly believed he never had! He was nice-looking, had ability, some patience, considerable humor and, in his lighter moments, he exercised a lively wit. When innumerable exasperations, not the least of which was weather, threatened to undermine our morale, we quoted his latest quips to cheer each other up. When swarms of American troops began to clutter all England and the folks at home still displayed remarkable ignorance of military use of alphabetical abbreviations, the C.O. solemnly wrote home that ETO meant England Taken Over.

Acknowledgment is made to the American Journal of Nursing, to Woman's Day and to the Quarterly Magazine published by our Alumnae Association of the School of Nursing for permission to quote parts of stories which appeared in their publications. I wish to thank those members of the Unit who have loaned their photographs for reproduction and to thank those nurses who recalled some of the anecdotes; most of the story has been culled from letters written home and from day-by-day notations in various diaries. No story of anyone is told with malice aforethought; no one can be heroic all the time—we proved it. If some of the situations and contretemps seem ridiculous and undignified to those who never were separated from civilized living, let them remember that war, grand and glorious on the Generals' maps, is full of mud, bugs and other desperations for the individual soldier, and we were soldiers along with ten million other Americans in uniform, who did the best we could about it. Incidentally, our side won. Remember?

MARJORIE PETO

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"Colonel Crawford announced a service stripe for each six months overseas was to be worn on left sleeves and three stars for three major battles were to be worn on theater ribbons.** No mention of home sweet home."**

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Fort George G. Meade

On the evening of January 31, 1942, the 2nd General Hospital affiliated with the Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center, New York City, was activated. The Unit Diary started on February 9, 1942, states: "Oath of Office. Finger Prints." On February 13, this item: "Friday the thirteenth but our lucky day! Board of Managers gave us a month's advance pay and assured us of a leave of absence for the duration. We received seven(!) copies of our orders." The nurses were off to Ft. Meade and to war—so they thought. In two weeks, more than half had returned to New York to visit relatives and enjoy the last home-cooked meal. They continued to do this for four months and as time went on they were afraid the war would be over before they got overseas. Their fears along this line were to give them a hollow laugh three years later.

The camp at Ft. Meade at this time covered 17 acres and seemed huge. The Station Hospital had 761 patients and the newly arrived nurses were housed in badly crowded conditions in two wards—26 and 27. The girls got lost all the time, especially on the way to and from the mess hall which was as far from the Hospital, said the New York nurses, as Coney Island from Prospect Park. Soldiers on the Post were eager to give directions only it turned out they were eminently unqualified to do so. There was a sinister enclosure on the grounds surrounded by three high barbed-wire fences; no one in it—yet. The Chief Nurse of the Station Hospital was Miss Sayde Rosenthal and she failed to escape being called "Rosie" by all and sundry.

Col. Crawford was put in charge of the 2nd General Hospital Unit. Convoys were moving out of camp continuously but one thousand men were admitted per day. Some of the inductees had college training but others had only grammar school background; regardless of education the required number was attached to the Unit to serve as corps men, swelling the personnel considerably. The Chief Nurse of 2nd General found herself inundated by paper work which, in the ensuing three and one-half years, she felt she never fought her way to the surface of. Gas masks were issued and a series of

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inoculations were administered; there were lectures on phosgene and mustard gases, lectures on airplane identification; movies showing how spies work and more lectures on military courtesy. Included in the training program for nurses was drilling in formation; this could have been enjoyable had not the drilling officer been convinced that women could not do well unless he swore at them continuously and offensively. Sometimes the nurses marched behind the long-striding doctors for several miles over rough terrain; it was an effort to keep up with them and as the spring sun got hotter in Maryland, painful sunburn and blistered feet were reported. At the end of these marches the detail was taken through gas-proof shelters; the entrances were small holes through which it was necessary to crawl on hands and knees. To the glee of the nurses the wider doctors got stuck. The officer status of the nurse was not clear at this time and meant little except that there was to be no association with the enlisted personnel. The nurses picked up some army slang; "over the hill" meant AWOL, and a "goldbricker" was a malingerer. Their slang vocabulary grew more colorful as the war progressed.

Col. Crawford instituted inspections every Saturday but no one worked on Sunday except the MPs. Visitors; no rifle practice, no drill. Pleasant walks to take, radios in camp and movies on the Post —$.14 admission. Utopia. The food in Ft. Meade was so good it became fabulous to recall and the outdoor exercise sent nurses to their mess with ferocious appetites. "Ah never did see the likes!" declared the delighted colored cook as fried chicken, juicy steaks, and all the succulent shellfish from the Chesapeake disappeared down hungry maws. Many felt it was a fattening up for the slaughter but it was wonderful while it lasted.

The issue of uniforms caused tears and merriment in feminine ranks; the Army's two sizes, too large and too small, was one wisecrack born of provocation. Eventually, with seams let out here and tucks taken there, the 2nd General nurses presented a reasonably officer-like appearance. Even though it required continual and vigorous brushing, the light blue skirt, dark blue jacket and overseas cap was liked better than any uniform the nurses later were required to wear. Dr. Albert Levy (sorry, Lieutenant!) gave the Chief Nurse her First Lieutenant's bars. It was strange to see the doctors in uniform,

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stranger to be required to address them by their military titles. Men drilled at dawn outside the windows of the nurses' barracks and a not-so-good bugler struggled with his notes. On March 7th, 1942, Anna D. Wolf, Director of the School of Nursing of Johns Hopkins Hospital, invited Lt. Peto and her executive assistants to luncheon where they met Miss Mary Sanders, Chief Nurse of Johns Hopkins Unit. The visiting group was taken through the hospital later. The T/O (Table of Organization) at this time called for 105 nurses and the Chief Nurse of 2nd General found it necessary to go to Washington to ask for more nurses and for more shoes, caps and jackets with which to outfit the nurses she already had; she returned with six more nurses but no more uniforms. Instead, another bundle of blankets arrived, making five to each nurse; this added credence to the rumor that the Unit was bound for Alaska! But rumors flew even faster in the Army than they had in Presbyterian Hospital.

Nature put on her own show that spring in the form of a blizzard; the kind of snow that covers the Jungfrau descended on the Post and surrounding territory. Even Washington disappeared. Those on week-end leave had an epic struggle to get back; bus service from train terminals broke down and great army trucks, modern version of the St. Bernard dogs, rescued officers and enlisted men as arms and legs thrashed about in engulfing snowbanks. Next day those with cameras dragged them out and if in the future any veteran's pride and joy refuses to believe how Daddy or Mommy fought the war in twenty-two (official) inches of snow in the south on Palm Sunday, there are some fine shots of Maryland-Alpine scenery to convince the little sprout. One of the nurses pulled out of a drift had been to New York on leave and she wrote home: "I stopped trying to reach anywhere when the snow was up to my armpits; then someone yanked me into a truck. At that, those boys were not as bent on rescue as they were in seeing how their brand new trucks would behave in an emergency!"

In April and May (1942) the amazing mud which surrounded barracks and hospital suddenly justified the confidence the Post's gardener had shown when he sowed buckets of grass seed and planted hundreds of tulips in its oozy warmth. The band marched and drilled outdoors followed by lots of frisking, happy dogs. The dogs not

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only followed the band, they followed the men into the mess halls only to be coaxed out again with chop bones; it was a good technique and worked every time. Bonnie was a scottie who belonged to an officer but she had adopted the gardener pro tem because he allowed her to ride in his wheelbarrow. The bugler improved—slightly. As the camp prettied up many visitors from the home hospital were entertained by the 2nd General group. Miss Helen Young (who thought the living conditions for the nurses pretty bad), Miss Elliot, Miss Lee, Miss Penland, Miss Conrad, Miss Scott, Miss McCurdie, visited the Unit; so did Dr. Whipple, Dr. Loeb, and Dr. Draper. Mr. Bush came with one of the parties; he put a quarter in the slot machine in the Officer's Club and made history by hitting the jackpot. During the first week in May, Dr. and Mrs. St. John visited 2nd General; Mrs. St. John wore her Red Cross uniform and her Foreign Service decoration bestowed on her in the last war. Lt. Peto had luncheon with the party which included: Col. Crawford, Col. Borden, Col. Parsons, Major Schullinger, Major Sloan, Dr. and Mrs. St. John. Flowery speeches were made; apparently everyone present thought most highly of everyone present! Miss Rosenthal was impressed for a few days later when Lt. Peto exclaimed, "The only person left to visit us now is the President," (meaning Mr. Dean Sage), Rosie said innocently, "The President of the United States?"

The news of the loss of the Philippine Islands shocked the camp; there were profane comments and grim promises to get them back. On May 29, 1942, there appeared in the *Pill Roller,* bulletin for 2nd General Hospital, this notice: "Lt. Col. Parsons leaves the Unit. The only member of the 2nd General Hospital who belonged to the Unit in World War I. Lt. Col. William Barkley Parsons, Chief of the Surgical Staff, left the organization on Tuesday of this week. He will be succeeded by Major Rudolph Schullinger." Col. Crawford wrote in the *Pill Roller:* "The loss of Col. Parsons will be keenly felt by the doctors and nurses who have been so closely associated with him." A wave of unrest seized the nurses; their first experience of the Army's hurry-up-and-wait policy irked; some wanted to join other smaller groups under the impression they would see action faster. It was difficult to find things for them to do. Col. Card, C. O. of the Station Hospital, opened a gymnasium to be used as a rink

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and then, like pulling a rabbit out of a hat, he produced a hundred pairs of roller skates and told Lt. Peto to let her nurses work off their excess steam. With no spectators to inhibit, the girls put on some fancy and hilarious acrobatics!

Memorial Day. Six Army cars plus a jeep filled with nurses went to Arlington Cemetery where a memorial service was held for Anna C. Maxwell and flowers placed on her grave. Miss Young greeted the nurses on their arrival. It had been through Miss Maxwell's efforts that nurses in the Army today are commissioned officers. Lts. Margaret Peters and Mary Swallen carried the Stars and Stripes and the Red Cross flag respectively.

In June the home hospital was having Graduation Day and the School of Nursing was celebrating its 50th Anniversary. Nostalgia was diverted by an order that sounded important: "All overseas baggage limited to 150 pounds." At long last the Chief Nurse's typewriter went out and the wise-acres said; "This is it."

A letter arrived for Lt. Peto from Miss Isabel Stewart of Teachers College, Columbia University: "What ever the difficulties may be, and there will be many, be sure the College, as well as the School of Nursing, takes pride in your contribution to the war effort. Know that your friends and colleagues are standing back of you and your group and have great faith in you. Also we are just a little envious." Miss Margaret Conrad, Prof. of Nursing, Columbia-Presbyterian School of Nursing, wrote to Lt. Peto: "To have kept that large group of people philosophical and contented for such a length of time, with all the inconveniences and irritations, is a major achievement. We are all immensely proud of you."

With deepest secrecy 2nd General Hospital Unit was put on a train which took a whole long day to arrive at Camp Dix, N. J. Then —anti-climax! Everyone was given leave and those whose homes were within easy reach descended on their surprised families to eat one more farewell steak and to be kissed goodby again.

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The Crossing

On June 30, 1942, the 2nd General Hospital nurses staggered up the gangplank of the Duchess of Bedford dressed in navy blue woolen uniforms; each carried a pistol belt, canteen full of water, first-aid kit, gas mask, musette bag, overcoat, steel helmet and a suitcase which weighed at least 25 pounds. The temperature that day, 98 degrees. The ship, a liner which had been commandeered hastily as a troopship without benefit of reconstruction, carried five times her normal quota of passengers—there were over 4000 troops aboard. Accommodations for the nurses, 4 or 8 to a cabin, were adequate if crowded; the men slept where they could find space to lie down—floors, shelves, and even on dining room and card room tables which were cleared each night at 9 P. M. for the purpose. Soldiers threw dice for the right to curl up in the glass show case which formerly displayed jewelry and trinkets for sale to pretty ladies; the losers stood around and made grisly remarks about the winner's appearance as he snuggled down on puffed satin for the night! The following appeared in the diary of a nurse who slipped past the guards and stayed on deck all the first night.

"The ship slipped from her pier at 1 A.M. and anchored in the Hudson. All was quiet. The hot day turned into a cool night with mist. At 4 A.M. there came the rumble of the anchor and the Duchess of Bedford sneaked down the river with other ships falling into ghostly line; the familiar landmarks brought a sinking sensation and a terrific urge to turn back. Suddenly the U. S. Navy seemed to be surrounding us and when day dawned bright and clear thousands of soldiers crowded the decks to watch excitedly the convoy forming. A huge dirigible overhead added to the sense of security. U-boats infested the Atlantic but we were to be looked after."

Troops were warned not to throw paper or refuse of any sort overboard to leave in the wake of the ship telltale evidence of a convoys passing. It was not possible to carry out a training program on board but First Aid Stations were set up and the ship's small hospital staffed. The nurses spent the days and nights reading, singing and playing cards, with continuous speculation going on—Alaska?

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Ireland? Australia? On this convoy no restrictions were made for the nurses that did not apply to the male officers. The crossing was smooth, the weather cold. Portholes were sealed and painted black; no lights of any kind showed and though the fog was thick no sirens blew, no radio messages were sent. There was a ship's newspaper—the *Convoy Gazette*, whose banner-head read: "We cover the world. News from Authentic Sources, received by Ship's Radio." Headlines on this passage read: "Extra! The Battleship von Tirpitz, one of the mightiest warships afloat, has been torpedoed and badly damaged by a Russian submarine." "Russians counterattack German wedge at the Don River." "Wilhelmshaven heavily hit in 66th raid by the Royal Air Force." "Same old lull in Egypt." "The Allied convoy en route to Russia which the Germans claimed to have destroyed has arrived safely at destination." The last item cheered the troops on the Duchess of Bedford mightily.

Fourth of July was celebrated with some attempt at festivity; General Theodore Roosevelt, accompanying 1st Division troops, gave a traditionally patriotic speech and there was singing of the National Anthem. The Star Spangled Banner, on a British ship, afforded mild amusement.

Alarms were experienced. In mid-ocean and foe-dominated zone the Duchess of Bedford slowed, began to veer north, south, east and west to the consternation of those on board who had compasses; the fog was dense and there was wild speculation. Later it came out that two of the ships were missing from the line; after two days of anxious searching they were given up for lost and the convoy proceeded on its way. At 4:30 P.M., July 12, 1942, the Duchess of Bedford steamed up the Mersey River and into an improvised dock at Liverpool. It was impossible to see much of the city for wreckage, fallen brick and twisted iron were everywhere. A fleet of barrage balloons floated over the whole shipping area. It was finally announced that troops must stay on board all night; to amuse themselves the men threw candy, oranges, cigarettes and money to people on the pier and to workmen returning to their homes on passing ferryboats. There was shouting and yelling and the water was littered with debris; Col. Crawford, leaning over the ship's rail, was heard to murmur—"The quality of Mersey is not strained."

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Hoarse and tired the nurses went to bed but there prevailed an uneasy feeling that the Germans surely would know they had arrived and would be right over with a welcoming party. Nothing happened but a call to breakfast at 4:00 A. M. All the way over, the enlisted men with confidence and salty oaths, had been teaching a group of very young R.A.F. pilots, who had been training in the States, the American way of gambling. It was an all-out, what-the-hell technique that put to shame the stakes the officers risked on their bridge and poker; but it was the flyers who staggered off the ship with barracks bags bulging with loot—silk stockings, lip sticks, cosmetics, perfume and what-have-you, enough to keep them popular for a year with their female dates. Two days later it was learned the little lost ships had made port all on their own!

2nd General Hospital was one of the very first medical units to arrive in England.

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England – Lichfield

At no other time was the 2nd General nursing group so discouraged and disheartened as it was in the first bivouac area, Whittington Barracks, Lichfield. Women were not expected and no provisions for their accommodation had been made. The tin huts hastily assigned to them were cold, disgustingly dirty, dismal—a prison-like set-up. The sandwiches given to the nurses as they debarked from the ship were supposed to sustain them until they reached destination; they proved to be full of worms and were thrown away. Restaurants refused to sell them food and the townspeople were afraid of being eaten out of house and home. It was all too new, this sudden swarm of Americans. At the camp there was supper of spoiled ham, boiled potatoes and cabbage; it failed to raise spirits and that same evening another unit arrived to add to the confusion in the desolate huts. The sudden change from comfort, tasty food, lights at night, plenty of soap and hot water, central heating, private baths and familiar surroundings, to one of bombed-out buildings, scant food, no soap or hot water, black paint on windows, coal stoves, community baths with old-fashioned plumbing, store windows bare or with tragically poor merchandise on display, shabbily dressed people—this was the sharpest adjustment the group ever had to make. It was to experience worse conditions as the war progressed but the changes grew, they did not happen overnight.

Lectures started immediately. An English officer, the Garrison Adjutant at Lichfield, spoke to the nurses of air raids, shelters, behavior and even on shopping; he grew lyrical on what a wonderful city Birmingham was in which to buy things despite the bad havoc of recent raids.

"Can we buy things without coupons?" one of the nurses wanted to know.

The officer was shocked—"Oh no!"

"Are we to be given coupons?" asked the nurse.

The lecturer thought not but persevered in describing the attractions of Birmingham stores.

The nurse was one of those who follow through.

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"If we cannot buy anything without coupons and are not to be given any, there isn't any point in going to Birmingham, is there?"

The Adjutant paused unhappily, then as light descended, said; "Oh! I see what you mean."

But he had no solution.

Time out from lectures was spent sightseeing; Coventry rather than Birmingham was visited. They found the devastation shocking and sobering; the ruins of the central part of town and beautiful cathedral were viewed with profound silence. After all, this was one of the reasons they were here. Yet it was in Coventry stores the doctors and nurses found something to buy which they wanted badly and which required no coupons. Bicycles. It seemed a miracle and they went a little crazy. Throughout their stay in England (and Ireland) no other possession afforded them greater pleasure or enabled them more happily and healthfully to see the countryside.

One night German bombers flew over the bivouac area and dropped their bombs on nearby Birmingham; the din was deafening and great flames shot into the sky. Although the nurses had been introduced to the shelters by the local guards they were told not to go there until they heard an alert sounded on a goat's horn. This mysterious direction intrigued the non-foxhunting group from New York City; in the meantime they put on helmets and gas masks and sallied outdoors to watch the show. The guard arrived, scolded them roundly and sent them indoors with admonishment to await the goat's horn. It never tootled while the group was stationed there—to the disappointment of all. At 2 A. M. the night of the Birmingham raid the Chief Nurse was aroused and told to report to Headquarters; orders had come to send half the unit out at 4 A. M. "Destination unknown." There was a terrific scramble to get things together and packed in the blackout and there were mutters of protest at being split up. Those moving out somehow managed to assemble their belongings; they took even the bicycles they had purchased a day or two before! "Destination unknown" in this case turned out to be North Ireland where the nurses, under Lt. Ada Mutch, took care of patients suffering with jaundice. They established an Arts and Crafts shop for them which did much for the morale of those who needed occupational diversion rather than nursing care. At the end

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of five months this group rejoined 2nd General by then installed and operating in Oxford; they brought their tools with them and for a time the Arts and Crafts shop was continued. The war in Africa brought on so many battle casualties the shop, no longer a great need, was closed for the personnel to run it could not be spared. It had served a good purpose in Ireland and will remain, along with their stay there, a happy memory for many.

Most of the lectures to which the nursing group listened while stationed in Lichfield had to do with censorship; *never* divulge to *anyone* your organization, its location, movements, size. The boogie man would get you if you did and quite right, too; it was serious. Shortly after the arrival of the American medical group in Lichfield, King George and Queen Elizabeth visited the ancient and loyal city for the first time. They visited the famous cathedral, saw its relics and antiquities, had tea with Bishop and Mrs. Woods in the Palace and then viewed Dr. Samuel Johnson's birthplace. A large crowd gathered in the Close and along the Dean's Walk among which were soldiers, Australian Air Force sergeants, 2nd General Hospital nurses and citizens. Women, grasping their little "nippers" by the hand spoke to the nurses, telling them among other things that the town of Lichfield, Connecticut, had sent the town of Lichfield, England money for its war orphans. Finally the Royal visitors came along the Walk; the King was dressed in his R.A.F. uniform of an Air Commodore and the Queen wore a duck-egg blue suit with gay flower hat. The Queen's attention was attracted by the nurses, the first American nurses she had met on English soil and she stopped to speak to them. She said how pleased she and the King were to see them in England; she was curious, gracious, and asked questions.

"Where are you located?" she asked Lt. Madeline Young.

The questioned nurse, fresh from a keep-your-lip-buttoned sermon, blushed furiously and stammered, "N— nearby."

"How long have you been here?" This query was put to Lt. Constance Gough.

"Oh! Oh! A— a little while."

Another question to Lt. Mary Ann Delaney received an elusive reply; it made the nurses sound not quite bright but it is to be hoped Her Majesty understood that they were torn between a real desire not to offend her and an equally ardent desire not to be shot at dawn.

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England — Oxford

Part One

WHEN 2nd General Hospital took over Churchill Hospital near Oxford and nearer Headington, it was a military secret and the strictest censorship was impressed on all personnel. It turned out later that it was a secret from everyone but Lord Haw Haw; apparently he knew everything, told it, and was not to pay for this treasonous celerity for four more years. The Unit consisted of 500 enlisted men, 50 doctors, 105 nurses, 12 dietitians and Red Cross workers, the latter under Mary Witt. The AHB (American Hospital in Britain) personnel were still there and there were 60 patients. The main buildings were one-story brick and had central heating; the Nissen huts had coal stoves. When the 2nd General Unit arrived they were shown to warm and clean quarters and a hot supper was served. After the wretched discomfort of shifting about, this final location seemed too good to be true. Had the nurses known this was to be their home for two long years, with France still to go, they might not have cheered so heartily.

Churchill had been represented by the U. S. Army as a 500 bed hospital, fully equipped. In reality the AHB had never had more than 250 patients and inventory revealed much of the equipment lacking. No ice boxes and one washing machine—household size! 2nd General took over the second day after their arrival and in two weeks the hospital was filled to capacity; the personnel learned how to improvise and economize. The laundry problem was solved by sending everything in to London by trucks. Builders and inspecting generals swarmed over hospital grounds—it started to grow. Each ward was a separate building necessitating going outdoors to get from one to another. In July the damp and chill was such that most of the nurses caught cold. Admissions to the hospital at this time were for pneumonia, the only infection against which the nurses had not been inoculated—and could not be. American girls brought up on transparent underwear began to hint in letters home that something long, warm and thick for Christmas would not deal an unbearable blow to their pride. Already the patients in the hospital were sleeping in colored-stripe woolen garments though "iced" lemonade (made with powder) was served for lunch and dinner. Vitamin C was a diet re-

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quirement and a paternal government thought up this way to administer it; the menus were planned in Washington and it was hard luck to be shivering in England while the Capital City of the United States sweltered in a heat wave. There was to be no heat in the Hospital buildings until November 1, and as there was a shortage of robes for patients, an appeal was made to the Red Cross. An emergency package arrived; it contained women's fitted bright pink robes and bed jackets of yellow splashed with red roses. The men greeted them with ribald jeers but they were cold—they wore them. One nurse wrote home at this time:

"We aren't allowed to write about the weather, destruction of cities, construction of anything; nothing about the Army, the Navy or the Air Forces. We may not criticize the English people or any of our Allies; we cannot say what we lack nor are we allowed to solicit gifts. We can't buy anything. The countryside is pretty where we are—if you admire moss on your roof. So I remain, Your loving daughter—"

By August of 1942 the Hospital got very busy. It is true that a soldier can be as badly injured in a blackout as in warfare and an appendicitis patient as ill as a battle casualty but it is more interesting to care for the battle casualty. Soldiers are always falling out of barrack's windows; they did it in Ft. Meade and they continued the habit in the ETO. When there were no windows they fell over tent pegs. In Oxford, except for the patients from the African theater, the only battle casualties were from the Air Corps. Frost bite was the common diagnosis of flyers returning from raids over Germany; a matter of life or hands, they would take off their gloves to adjust a gas mask. Frozen hands sometimes swell to three times their normal size; the technique for treatment was new, much careful research was done and progress was made in saving hands from amputation. The strides made with new drugs, especially penicillin, were as spectacular as anything happening on the battlefields. It was October before the first death due to war injury occurred in 2nd General. A rear gunner in the Air Force, twenty-three years old, had been shot through the chest and not operated on for twelve hours after his hurt; his plane dared not return alone over the Channel but had to

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wait until the mission was completed. He lived seven days and everyone was much upset at losing him.

The Hospital was becoming so well known by this time it entertained many distinguished visitors, among whom were: Dame Katherine Jones, Brigadier General and Matron-in-Chief of the Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service; Vice-Admiral Wakeley, Surgeon-in-Chief of the Royal Navy; John Masefield, Poet Laureate of England, who read his poems to the staff; Lady Astor, Mrs. Roosevelt. The Chief Nurse of 2nd General confessed to a strong dislike for being called by the customary English title of Matron; even though it suggests in England dignity only a little less than that of the Prime Minister's, she felt the word in America had a reformatory flavor; as this was an American hospital, Lt. Peto felt justified in issuing instructions to her own personnel. As a reminder her desk bore a small card inscribed: "Miss Peto." But those who fly in the teeth of British tradition go down ingloriously. Lady Astor, small and brisk, arrived one day asking to see the Matron. The clerk at the reception desk said pointedly; "Do you wish to see the Chief Nurse?"

"I desire to see the Matron!" There was no uncertainty about it.

"We don't have one," came the blunt reply but the clerk was getting hot under his collar.

The Chief Nurse appeared in time to greet the visitor properly and take her on a tour of inspection but she remained a Matron the rest of the afternoon.

When word went around that Mrs. Roosevelt, wife of the President, was going to visit the Hospital there was a great to-do among the patients. Boy, oh boy! They were going to tell Eleanor how badly they were treated, how unspeakable (they had a word for it) the food was, how mean the nurses were to them; it was going to be a pushover to air all their G. I. gripes where it would do some good. Although the nurses knew this was kidding, the bombastic threats sounded dire enough and you never could tell what a wounded G. I. bored with inaction more than suffering, would do just for the merry hell of it.

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Nurses' Quarters.

Cars Under Snow, Palm Sunday 1942.

Movie Theater and Lecture Hall
Opposite Nurses' Quarters.

Entrance to Station Hospital
Ft. George G. Meade.

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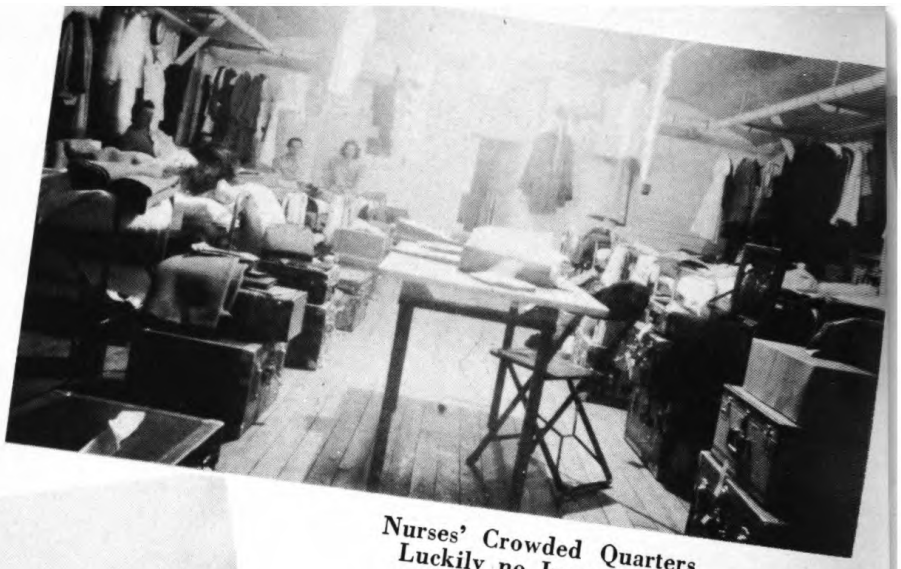
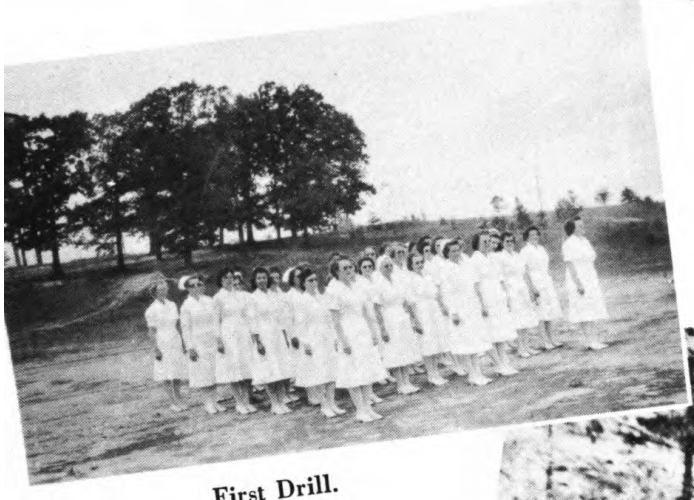
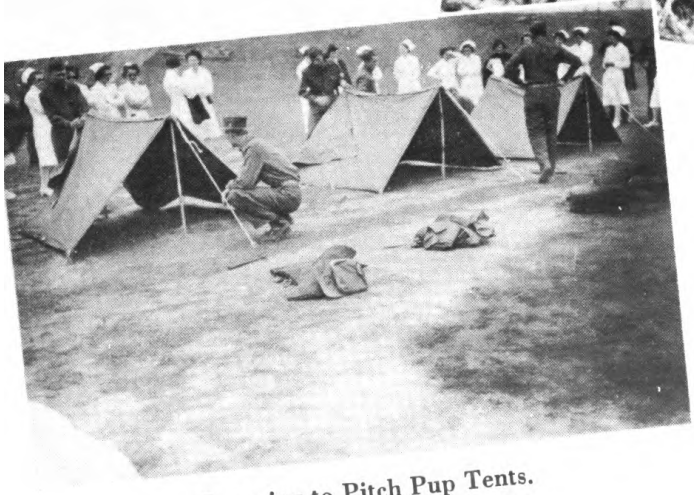


Nurses' Crowded Quarters
Luckily no Inspections.



First Drill.

Exit from Gas Shelter
Training Program.
Lts. Albert Levy and
Clara Peery.



Learning to Pitch Pup Tents.

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Chief Nurse and
Luggage.

Leaving Fort Meade
Destination Unknown.

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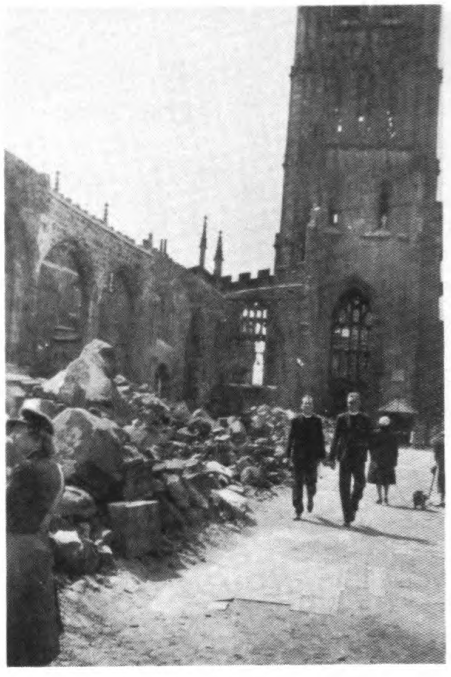
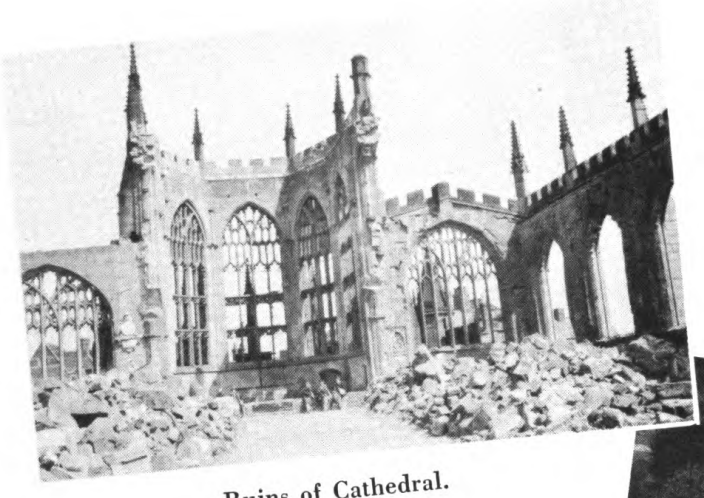
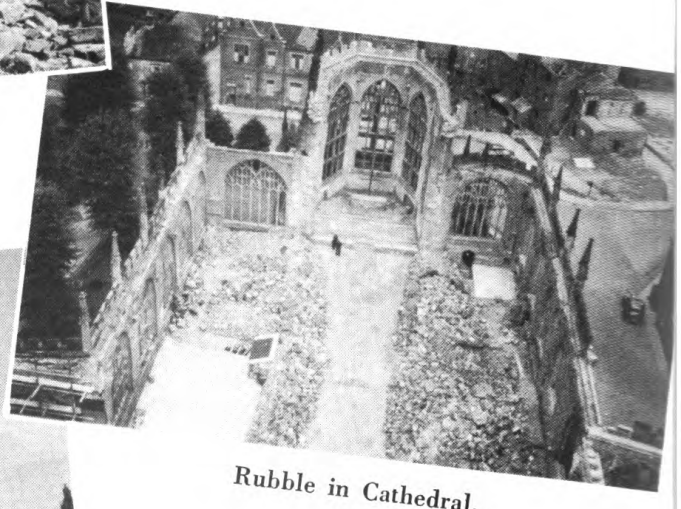
Lichfield Station.



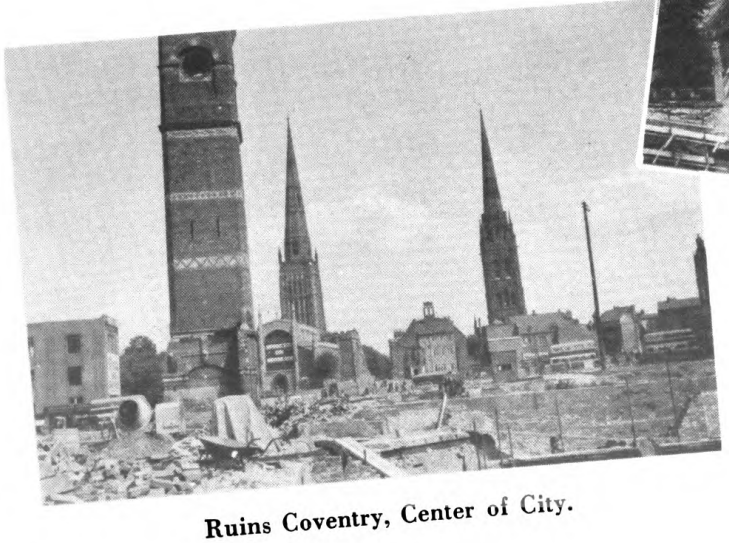
Ruins Coventry Cathedral.



Ruins of Cathedral.



Rubble in Cathedral.



Ruins Coventry, Center of City.

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With an impressive escort of 12 MPs on motorcycles, the First Lady arrived, looking handsomer far than her pictures ever indicate; a gracious person, too. Doctors and nurses were at their respective wards, as usual at an inspection, to greet her; the Commanding Officer and the Chief Nurse accompanied her on the rounds. The patients lay rigid as if at attention; not a ripple of movement. The questioning went on:

"Soldier, do you have good food?"

"Yes, m'am."

"Are you warm enough?"

"Yes, m'am."

"Do you have good nursing care?"

"Yes, m'am."

"Are you getting letters from home?"

"Yes, m'am."

So it went; butter wouldn't have melted in their mouths!

The nurses had their innings the next day.

The U.S.O. sent entertainers, the glamor girls and boys from Hollywood,—Kay Frances, Patricia Morrison, Mitzi Mayfair, Carol Landis (she married her flyer-husband while at the 2nd General), Merle Oberon; all, after their shows, went around the wards autographing plaster casts and pound notes while the patients squirmed with delight. Frank McHugh, Allen Jenkins, Al Jolson; the latter told the men—"Don't thank me for what I am doing; you're doing more for me than I could ever do for you." Ham, but the patients loved it. Allen Jenkins told the Chief Nurse as she was stepping into a Morris car—"Don't get into that thing—wear it." The entertainers said they had played for some of the English factory workers but their best jokes fell so flat they hit bottom. Bob Hope was uproariously popular; he suddenly interrupted his act one afternoon to announce that he was going to dance with his cousin. Audience all agog. Coming from the platform he grabbed Lt. Elizabeth Smith Habif and did some breathless twirls with her. She was his cousin too, no gag about it!

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It had to be a day when the Chief Nurse's hair was limp from rush and weather and her uniform sans starch for the same reason, the C. O. demanded her presence in his office. He wished to present Mr. Adolph Menjou who had appeared without fanfare to bring cheer to wounded enlisted men by conversing with them; would Lt. Peto show him around? It was unreasonable to blame Mr. Menjou because his raiment was as impervious to disarray in England as on a Hollywood screen set but the Chief Nurse did. However, they went around the wards. Mr. Menjou's approach to each patient was:

"Do you know who I am?"

It was surprising that so many said, "No sir."

Feeling this would never do, nurses were sent ahead to spread the tidings about the visitor. On one ward a wounded Negro infantryman slept soundly; no one bothered to wake him. But Mr. Menjou did; he tapped the sleeper on his shoulder and as the wondering eyes opened he propounded his question:

"Soldier, do you know who I am?"

"No, sir."

"You don't? What State are you from?"

"California, sir." There was a southern drawl to the words.

"California; good! What city are you from?"

"Hollywood, sir."

That stopped the world's best-dressed and almost best-well-known actor.

Newspaper reporters from London breezed in to write up the splendid work the Medical Unit from the States was doing. One was a French woman and she told how wonderful it was to see how London had changed since the arrival of the Americans; she explained that she, personally, adored Americans because they were so noisy!

Almost immediately after arriving in Oxford the doctors and other officers established an Officers' Club. Nurses were admitted only by invitation on Saturday nights and only when accompanied

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by escorts. The nurses felt that this was tantamount to a snubbing for where were they to get escorts? The doctors keenly missed their homes and families but they seemed not to remember that the young women in their group also had given up homes and family ties. The need for a club of their own became increasingly evident. Blackout and transportation difficulties confined women to the Post evenings for the terrain was full of foot-traps, cows and ditches and, inside, when not on duty there was nothing for them to do. The nurses resolved to start a club; they secured the permission and interest of Col. Crawford who designated two large rooms to be used for the purpose. Lieutenants Margaret Dey and Clara Batchelder Perry, Maggie and Batch to their intimates, were two nurses each of whom, in defiance of Army Regulations had got herself married the day before the Unit sailed. For their sins they expected to be ordered back to the States and discharged from the service. Instead, the Army kept them working and in suspense; they were unprepared for this gambit and were restless. It was decided to make use of their peculiar initiative and energy and the two nurses were dispatched to London on a tough assignment,—to purchase, in a city of shortages, furniture for the club and to contact a firm which would contract to supply regularly the club's bar with beer and other beverages. The lieutenants returned amazingly successful. They had cajoled a few pieces of furniture, including easy chairs, from one merchant and had induced a dealer in liquors to contract to keep the little bar serviced with what it takes. A surprised and elderly Oxford dealer in glassware delivered the large order of drinking glasses himself in several laborious trips up the Hospital hill, by bicycle. The English merchant keeps his contracts, big or small. Rugs were found for the sitting room and the nurses made curtains for the windows; a matching ruffled skirt glorified the strictly feminine bar in the second room. It became a snug haven of cosiness and was given the name—*Vestals' Retreat.* The club was run entirely by the nurses for the nurses and will be remembered happily by all who spent many evenings there. Each nurse felt as though it was her home; she was free to come and go without an escort and could always find a friend or invite one to keep her company. No combined club ever could have given to the nurses the feeling of freedom and relaxation they enjoyed at the *Vestals' Retreat.*

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Col. Crawford had received permission from the Army to employ English women to work in the Hospital as nurses' aids; Mrs. Stockdale called in answer to an advertisement. The Chief Nurse interviewed her and although neither understood the other's English very well, Mrs. Stockdale knew she was hired. Then Col. Crawford received an Army communication to the effect that he was *not* to employ English women to work in 2nd General. The Chief Nurse was on her way to the disagreeable task of informing Mrs. Stockdale when she had a bright idea; this intelligent and agreeable woman would make a fine hostess (as New York would put it) or a fine bar maid (as England would put it) for the *Vestals' Retreat.* She could be employed privately and paid from funds of the club. It worked. True, Mrs. Stockdale labored under the delusion that she had been employed as a nurses' aid and was a bit bewildered to find herself a bar maid but she laughed about it and liked her job. Her husband was in the R.A.F. and they had two sons. Upon receipt of a box at Christmas time the little one wrote:

Dear American Nurses;

Thank you very much for the parcel of goodies, I enjoyed them very much. I appreciate your kindness and wish you a happy and victorious New Year.

Your's truly;

Jackie Stockdale.

Mrs. Stockdale proved immensely efficient, honest and most popular and remained with the club to the day it ceased to function when the Unit moved out of Oxford two years later. On one occasion the nurses were bitterly angry at the English people for some reason; they voiced their feelings loudly and hotly in the club's sitting room. Mrs. Stockdale moved quietly about. Later two of the nurses went to her and said; "We are very sorry you heard. We did not mean to hurt you and we do not really hate the English as it must have sounded."

Mrs. Stockdale smiled warmly; "I was not hurt; you see, I know what the trouble is. Everyone of you is just plain homesick."

The nurses decided she had something there.

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Two personable young students from Oxford University were guests one night in the *Vestals' Retreat.* The C. O. dropped in, as he occasionally did, for the chairs were comfortable and the beer cooler than anywhere else in England. The visitors gradually relaxed and told stories. They told how the Prime Minister was making a speech in Commons one day while Mr. Bevin, in an anteroom, was struggling with a long-distance communicant. His shouts annoyed Mr. Churchill who finally bade an usher see what the row was about.

"It's Mr. Bevin, sir; he's talking to Scotland."

Said Mr. Churchill dryly; "Ask him why he doesn't use the telephone."

Col. Crawford mellowed and told some tales with a United States flavor. The visitors declared that as soon as the war was over they meant to visit the States; one of them had a valued friend in Georgia. With un-British impulse to show off he said; "That's the State connected with your General Sherman in some way, isn't it, sir?"

"Yes, yes it is," agreed the C. O. "When you come to America and visit Georgia you get them to show you the fine statue of General Sherman in Atlanta."

"I will, sir" promised the student seriously. The C. O. felt no shame, he was one of those who think it high time English schools included some American history in their curriculums.

In a short time there was a plethora of escorts for the nurses; the Eighth Air Force moved to an adjoining field and the 133rd Infantry occupied another nearby camp. Dances were given at 2nd General every Saturday night and officers from all the services, British and American, responded with enthusiasm to their invitations. At that time nurses were permitted to wear evening clothes most of which had been sent from the States though ingenuity had fashioned some from the poor quality yard goods available in local stores; the C. O. considered it a good morale builder for both sexes. Men's faces would light up with surprised pleasure at sight of pretty dresses worn by American girls. Because of rationing there were no dinner parties but Oxford and county families gave dances for the

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American doctors and nurses in historic, vast and heatless castles. There were invitations to tea. Tea! The Coco-Cola-conditioned palate from the States never yearned for tea but the nurses found tea drinking a relaxing custom. They had given up asking for water. And they had given up coaxing the horrified local chemist to install a soda fountain. Food! In a chemist's? Unthinkable. One day this invitation came.

Town Hall
Oxford

The Matron
Churchill Hospital
Oxford

Dear Matron;

I would be very pleased if you would come and have tea with me in my Parlour on Wed. at 4 P. M. I hope to have a small party of those interested in the medical services in Oxford.

Yours sincerely;
Maud A. M. White
Mayor

The Matron of Churchill (alias Chief Nurse of 2nd General) accepted Mayor White's invitation and was fascinated at this lady's dextrous technique at the tea table. Dignitaries from city and county hospitals gathered around while she, an extremely tall woman, stood to pour tea; necessarily there was a dismaying distance between the teapot held high in the air and the tea cups reposing on a low table but not a drop was spilled or splashed. Sheer legerdemain.

The nurses who had obtained bicycles rode about the countryside, along the tow-paths and through the story-book villages with the thatched-roof cottages; others went punting on the Cherwell. Leaves were spent sight-seeing; cathedrals, abbeys, ruins, 700-year-old hedges of yew, and castles complete with ghosts. "Not old," the English guide would say, "13th Century." Jaws dropped. To people educated to the beauty of the Empire State Building and the New York skyline, an appreciation of the mossy architecture of England had to be acquired. There was such an air of permanency and tranquil-

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lity over this part of England it would have been possible easily to disbelieve in the war had it not been for the planes passing overhead both night and day making such a roar sleep and work were disturbed. It was a magnificent sight to see 100 Fortresses flying in formation headed for the Channel and Germany. At the Hospital every one who could leave duty dashed outdoors to watch, thrill and call—"Good luck!" It was terrible to see them come back still in formation but with a plane missing here and there; the nurses thought how they probably had danced with the pilots the night before. At such times all were happy to be where they were, to help those wounded who did return. Other planes flew so low over the Hospital they escaped the roof by inches! Recovered pilot patients, the first chance they got, buzzed the Hospital to show their gratitude and to just plain show off to the nurses. Buzzing rattled the dishes on patients' trays, blew papers off desks and angered the C. O. But it went on. So did the war.

It was different when enemy planes visited England. No time or inclination then to watch. Every time the spine-tingling alert sounded from the nearby factory town of Cowley, a routine was executed simultaneously at 2nd General. Many times the siren screamed at 2 or 3 A. M. As there was no way of knowing whether it was practice or a real visit from Jerry, sleepy people responded "on the double." Well for them not to forget their helmets in any case for running to stations in blackout resulted in more casualties than were suffered because of raids. Col. Crawford had organized a few enlisted men into a courier brigade, their duty to cover designated corridors and portions of the Hospital sounding the warning: "Imminent danger! Imminent danger!" During one raid the Chief Nurse was hurrying in complete blackout to her station when she heard the door to the nurses' quarters flung open and the startling alarm—"Intimate danger! Intimate danger!" Laughing, she reported the incident to the C. O. who observed: "That young man has been around."

The Post had incendiary bomb drills, everybody out; each doctor, nurse and all enlisted men had a station and a duty to perform. One practice-drill crossed the borderline into realism late one afternoon. At the signal, the kitchen detail along with everyone else dashed to their stations. It was a day when the C. O. was all for

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having perfect performance and pumps were worked, sand was flung around and the whole routine gone over several times. When the cooks got back to their stoves, dinner for the whole Hospital was burned to sizzling crisps! Another meal had to be prepared and cooked. The air was blue with more than smoke.

Diaries kept by several of the nurses during October, 1942, yield these items:

"All personnel inoculated again. I guess the darn things work; we have no epidemics and few contagious cases. City chaps seem immune but the hillbillies come down with things. When we first came here it stayed light until 11:30 P. M., now it is dark at 4 P. M. Makes blackout last a long time; would be bad on a hot night—if we ever had a hot night."

"Much-needed new nurses arrived; wonder when the group from North Ireland will arrive? It better be soon, we are all working 72 hours a week. There is a rumor that all our Christmas mail is sunk. Everybody glum. No one will salute or speak to the poor mail officer. Such wonderful news from North Africa (BBC); if the mail is being held up to allow supplies to reach our men, it is all right with us. The Duchess of Bedford reported sunk—that makes six times; the news would make us all sad but two of our nurses on leave saw the Duchess last week with their own eyes."

In the Chief Nurse's diary: Oct. 29, 1942.

"Capt. Aarons, in charge of all nurses in the ETO, is a patient in 2nd General. The 3 and 6 in Oxford is trying to look like Christmas. No wrappings, you carry everything home in your fist including nails; the climax was reached when Charlotte Ives came running back to the Hospital with paint she had purchased—on the end of a spatula! There is enough to eat in England but it is cabbage, sprouts, cabbage; no variety and the cooking poor. Our own cooks are not bad but all they have to do is open cans of Spam and pineapple and dream up ways to make it look and taste like something else. So our Bill* is at Maxwell Field training for the Air Force! May he make a good pilot. Surely the war will be over before he gets over here!"

* William E. Peto, aged 19 years, nephew of the Chief Nurse.

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A holiday box labeled: "Can Be Opened Before Christmas" arrived for the Chief Nurse; it contained a red lace evening dress with accessories. It fitted, too, and came in time for the dance given by the Infantry group the following Saturday night in their gymnasium on their Post at Shrivenham. The invitation from Col. B. G. was presented personally by Capt. R. G. Smith, (Medical Detachment, Security Command) whose battalion was with the 133rd Infantry. Capt. Smith, an Oklahoma man, enjoyed such popularity he was seldom called anything else but "Doc". He would be going into combat along with his men, working right in the open; at present the outfit was waiting for medical supplies. The night of the dance was beautiful and the nurses had the kind of good time they still talk about. Their hosts sent the coach-and-six for them; well anyway, two ten-ton Army trucks. It was an athletic triumph to climb aboard without tearing dresses or silk stockings; Class A uniform, with its tight skirt, would have been little better. The floors of the trucks were padded with blankets which eased the cruel bouncing over rough roads; although the drivers had developed cat's-eyes from much driving in blackout, the trips to and from dances had their risks. There was singing en route. "You are my Sunshine— My Only Sunshine" was thrown challengingly into the darkness.

"Doc" Smith was a musician and he had organized a band of fourteen players from the enlisted men in his Unit; they played well and it was fun that night and many other nights to whirl to American music and to drink American beer. A surprise was sprung; the Chief Nurse was greeted on her arrival with the strains of "Margie" and even the "Lady in Red" was attempted as a compliment to her flame-colored dress.

Next week 2nd General entertained the 133rd, who brought their band with them. They played tirelessly all evening. An admission of 6 shillings was charged to this dance, guests were served all the beer they cared to drink, and so much money was taken in, it was possible to present the band with ten pounds for their contribution to the success of the party. There was considerable rivalry between the Infantry and the Eighth Air Force groups; the latter for their next dance sent planes and flew the guests from Oxford to

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Bedford. It was quicker transportation but to the nurses, who had watched the hedge-hopping antics of the pilots, the trip seemed just as hazardous. After working hard all day and dancing harder all night, one nurse wrote home: "Soon we are going to wish we had stayed in the States so we could feel sorry for the poor ANC overseas!" Other nurses threatened to go to bed for good when the war was over, just as Florence Nightingale had done.

Officers from the neighboring Infantry called on the nurses bearing gifts, not orchids or Sherry's candy, but liver and onions, jugged hare, steaks, pumpkin pies, and scotch; they had a line about their charm being irresistible to storekeepers. "Farewell" meals, sometimes cooked over open fires, were comparable to the "goodby" meals eaten during the stay at Ft. Meade, they went on and on pleasantly. It was hardly a secret that the 133rd Infantry was destined for North Africa and they would be off as soon as their medical supplies came; the men were confident, cheerful and very anxious to "get going," but in the meantime life was to be lived. When their supplies did arrive there was a great hustle-bustle to open the cases for distribution and repacking. Roars and crackling curses split the air when their eyes beheld a fine consignment of upholstered chairs! This crass blunder (or deliberate sabotage?) caused another delay; the 133rd did not move out of Shrivenham until December. Later, on the night of the affair of the packing cases, in the *Vestal's Retreat,* neither Col. B. G. nor "Doc" were amused but they summoned a smile when told what had happened to the Presbyterian Hospital Unit in World War I. Drs. Parsons and St. John had paced the floor and waited for most urgently needed medical supplies and when they arrived the cases contained mule harnesses!

"Somebody must think 'em up!" declared "Doc". "But someday I'm going to get shot and when I do I want a hypo and not an easy chair or a check rein."

His friends fear the words were prophetic.

In November the North Ireland group returned. Ada Mutch was made a 1st Lieutenant at this time as were Bernice Knowles and Mary Swallen who had remained with the Oxford group. The nurses from North Ireland were flush with consciousness of a good job done

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and more than a bit smug with their social activities. Picnic-frolics, dances and bicycle rides around the Emerald Isle had fostered romances; two engagements and two marriages, followed by four more marriages, was the outcome of this sojourn begun so unpropitiously on a fearsome night in a bivouac area. "Destination unknown," indeed! The nurses in Oxford felt the attitude of the newcomers a challenge and were more than willing to show off their conquests in the Infantry and Air Forces. There ensued a giddy round of gaiety which carried most of the reunited group over the first holidays without too much nostalgic pain. It was sad to say goodby to the friends the nurses had made when the 133rd moved out. In time the men wrote of the soft and luxurious life they were living in Africa and they sent presents of tropical fruits to prove it,—oranges, limes, lemons, dates and nuts. Later the 133rd Infantry went to Italy. At Anzio the whole detachment suffered almost complete annihilation. It was almost a year before Col. B. G. found courage to answer a letter pleading for news. He wrote in part: "I lost — percent of my men in that operation. My hair has turned completely white. You would not want to see me just now." No word of "Doc".

2nd General had become a paragon hospital and it was subjected to more than the usual number of inspections. The entire nursing staff had been carefully and excellently trained for giving superlative nursing care but their preparations in Army Regulations and Army Discipline was woefully inadequate. The task of converting civilian nurses into good soldiers fell on the not incapable shoulders of the Commanding Officer. He determined to develop in them a military bearing; teach them to salute properly and smartly; how to stand Retreat; how to drill and how to keep at all times "in uniform." He had his hands full with the formula for addressing an inspecting officer. The nurses were inclined to think the war was not to be won nor men's lives saved with correct sentences, especially with forms that changed weekly to comply with a pattern dear to the heart of someone who had to be humored. One week the formula would be:

"Sir; Lt. Ives, charge nurse, reporting."

Next week.

"Lt. Ives reporting, sir."

Still another week.

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"Sir; charge nurse Lt. Ives, ward 14, reporting."

Col. Crawford did not think this much to ask of the nurses; they weren't very bright if they couldn't remember a small sentence.

Just before an inspection by General Hawley the Chief Nurse personally coached each nurse in the form of address favored by him. General Hawley made his inspection. The patients, the wards, the housekeeping, all departments,—high marks. All had seemed to go off well until the C. O. sent a peremptory notice that he wanted to see his Chief Nurse. He was in a rage.

"Can't you get your nurses to report properly? Do you know what one of them did?" He paused to give her time to realize her goosepimples. "She saluted all right," he stormed, "Then she said 'Hello'."

There were times when 2nd General emerged from the visits of officialdom from the Southern Base full of pride but, alas, there were equally as many times when the departing generals left a wake of tears and imprecations. Sometimes there were narrow escapes. There was an inspection by General Thrasher. This time Col. Crawford wanted special attention paid to the kitchens, food storage, garbage disposal; there had been publicity and complaints about waste in the Army. A scrap of spoiled food would get a bad mark. Hadn't a wilted geranium on a window-sill and a microscopic fluff of dust under a bed ruined the last inspection? Well then—*bear down on the mops!* It so happened that one of the doctors, Major Grinnel, had been fishing several days before and had returned to the hospital with such a evil-looking and strong-smelling what-is-it that even he had doubts of its edibility and threw it into the icebox. Then forgot it. Supposing it to be the doctor's pride and joy, saved for a purpose, no one in the kitchen detail had the hardihood to throw it away. Not until the approaching wheels of General Thrasher's car crunched on the driveway did Major Grinnel think of his fish. He dashed to the icebox and lifted out the pale green thing. Everyone was stunned with horror; what to do with it? Theoretically, there should be no garbage; for inspection, garbage bins are scrubbed and empty. Suddenly a ward man stepped forward and took the fish from the officer's willing fingers; he slipped over to the brick wall of

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the hospital building and with the assurance of a man who has done the same thing before he pried loose bricks out with his penknife. A nice hole was revealed, a cache for love notes, cigarettes, money or, as now, an earnestly repudiated fish. It took a little cramming but the thing disappeared and the brick was replaced. General Thrasher advanced and if a putrescent aroma assailed his suspicious nostrils there was nothing visible to warrant inquiry. The hospital was saved. The fish may be there yet.

Whenever General Arnold made an inspection naturally he was most concerned with wounded flyers. His sympathy was stirred by one very young and very battered airman who lay in traction; broken bones, wounds, deep gashes. Just eyes and mouth peeked out of yards of bandage.

"Soldier, how did you get injured?"

The reply was meek and apologetic—"On a bicycle, sir." The General passed on.

When Col. Crawford made an inspection of troops (2nd General had troop inspections on its own parade grounds) he was a dignified, even formidable figure. Certainly the men whom he eyed with such stern appraisal would have been startled to know the things that went on in his mind. One day he stopped before a soldier whose uniform was baggy at the knees and rumpled generally.

"Soldier, when was your suit pressed last?"

"Last night, sir," came the surprising answer.

"Did our tailor do it?" inquired the C. O.

"No sir; my girl friend." The Colonel passed on.

Later that night in the *Vestals' Retreat* the C. O. said to his companions of the moment, he hoped the soldier's girl friend was warmer than her iron!

The most important inspection was also one of the last in Oxford; it took place in March 1944, only two months before orders arrived for moving out. Minute and meticulous preparations were made, for Major General Norman T. Kirk, Chief Surgeon of the U. S. Army, was to be the inspecting General. The prospect caused

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symptoms of nervous collapse in Col. Crawford who, after intensive drilling in "How to Conduct an Inspection," suddenly lost faith in his officers, his nurses, men, buttons, soap, water, shoe polish and God. This would be the pay-off and he contemplated the ordeal with gloomy foreboding. He attempted to do everything himself and, like all men in domestic crises, succeeded in getting underfoot. His Chief Nurse undertook to reassure him.

"Don't worry," she said brightly; "I know General Kirk and he is a fine person."

The C. O. stared at her and demanded—"How do *you* know him?"

The Chief Nurse smirked a little, "Oh, I've been fishing with him."

"You're making it up!" accused the C. O., and indicated that he was in no mood for jokes.

"My family used to have a cottage at Sag Harbor, L. I. Kay Edwards* lived in East Hampton and I visited her sometimes. Her uncle, Capt. Edwards owns a fleet of deep-sea fishing boats that go out from Montauk Point for tuna and once I was his guest. General Kirk, he was Col. Kirk then, was one of the other fishermen. I caught my tuna, too!" Pride. But she didn't tell how Dr. Kirk released the harness that strapped her to her seat, kept her from falling overboard, while she was so seasick she wished she would die.

"Well," the C. O. commented darkly, "a guy can be a good egg while he has a fishing line in his hands but be something else again when he's Chief Surgeon of the Army on inspection."

General Kirk arrived with a glittering escort of five other generals including General Hawley. It was impressive. Proper salutes were exchanged and there followed the most enjoyable inspection 2nd General ever had, or was to have. General Kirk was concerned with types of surgery; he examined x-rays with understanding and compliments were bestowed. Nursing techniques secured his attention rather than the angle of a bed table placed in relation to a bed or the exact inches dividing them. It was a Big Day and everyone relaxed as they saw the hospital coming off well. However, General

* Lt. Katherine Edwards was with the nurses in the 2nd General Hospital Unit.

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Kirk gave no indication that he had ever before in his life beheld the Chief Nurse and she dared not meet the sardonic eye of her C. O. Toward the last of the rounds, there was occasion for the Chief Nurse to go to her office; on entering she saw General Hawley sitting at her desk. "Oh, oh!" she thought with trepidation, "inspection here too?"

"Can I do something for you sir?"

"No, no thank you; I just wanted to rest my feet for a minute."

When the inspecting generals were saying their farewells in the entrance to the Hospital, General Kirk turned to the Chief Nurse suddenly; "How's the fishing out your way?"

"Oh, you do remember me, sir!"

"How could I forget?" asked the General. "You were the politest seasick girl whose head I have ever held over the side of a boat."

News travels. The nurses, to a girl, retired that night greatly cheered because a general's feet could hurt, even as their own.

Next day, on the Bulletin Board:

13 March 1944

MEMORANDUM:

To : All Officers, 2nd General Hospital

I. The Surgeon General of the Army, upon the completion of his inspection of the hospital this date, expressed great pleasure at what he had seen and desired that I convey to you his congratulations for the care which patients are receiving in our hospital. It gives me great pleasure to convey this message and to add my own congratulations and thanks to all.

P. M. Crawford
Colonel, M. C.
Commanding

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England — Oxford

Part Two

It is strange there are so many misconceptions between two English-speaking peoples who have the same ideals, moral values and language. It was no cinch to get together, even on words, when a freight car was a goods wagon and a man who works on the railroad was a navvy; an automobile was a motor car and the radio was the wireless; a street car was the tram and the hardware store was the ironmonger's; a light truck was a lorry and its hood was the bonnet; the fenders were wings and the fuel was petrol—when there was any; "sparking plugs" struck the nurses as very funny and they were amazed to find that "bloody" was a bad swear! To the English all Americans were Yankees and the men from the south of the Mason Dixon Line found that hard to take. Hollywood was to blame for some of the befuddlement. A nurse from 2nd General and her escort, a "bloke" (English term in good usage) who was a squadron leader in the R.A.F., went to the "cinema" one night and watched gangsters being chased back and forth across the George Washington Bridge.

"It makes me homesick," wailed the nurse.

"Oh I say, how exciting! Do you really have gangsters dashing about like that?"

"Heavens no! I meant the Bridge; I used to cross it every day to and from my work at the Medical Center."

"Oh." Plainly he was let down.

There was the London bobby approached by the Chief Nurse and one of her friends; the young women asked him if he knew where they could find a pound. He scowled; "No." Deflated but laughing they decided afterward that he thought they wanted to borrow money; they had been trying to adopt a dog. Unlike small-town America, London does not call her animal shelter a pound.

An adorable puppy was purchased finally in the Oxford market; his breed was indeterminate but his melting eyes sold him. He was called Sooner because early he showed that he would sooner be with

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Entrance to Churchill.

Nissen Huts are added.

Bedding Rolls and Trunks Arrive.

Interior of a Nurse's Room.

Patients with Haidee Scott Take Advantage of Rare Sunshine.

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Covered Walk to Vestals' Retreat.

Bar in Vestals' Retreat.

Mrs. Stockdale.

Beverage Arrives Vestals' Retreat.

Cheer.

Relaxation.

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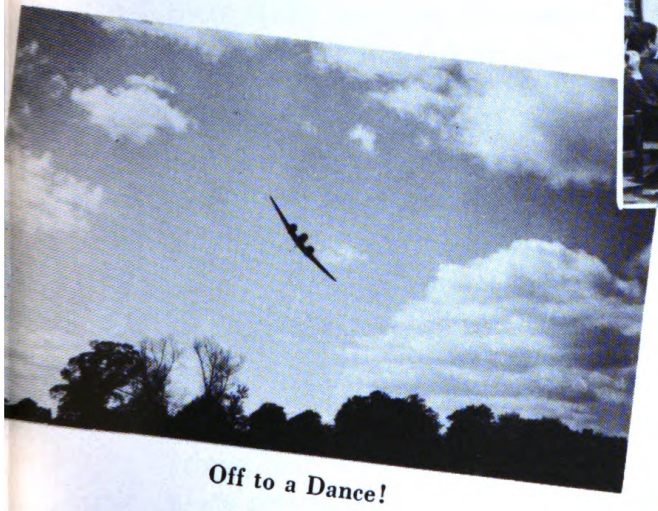
Elizabeth Habif, Bob Hope and David Habif.

Bob Hope Entertains.



Off to a Dance!

The Infantry Sends the Coach-and-Six!

The Air Force Sends a Fortress.

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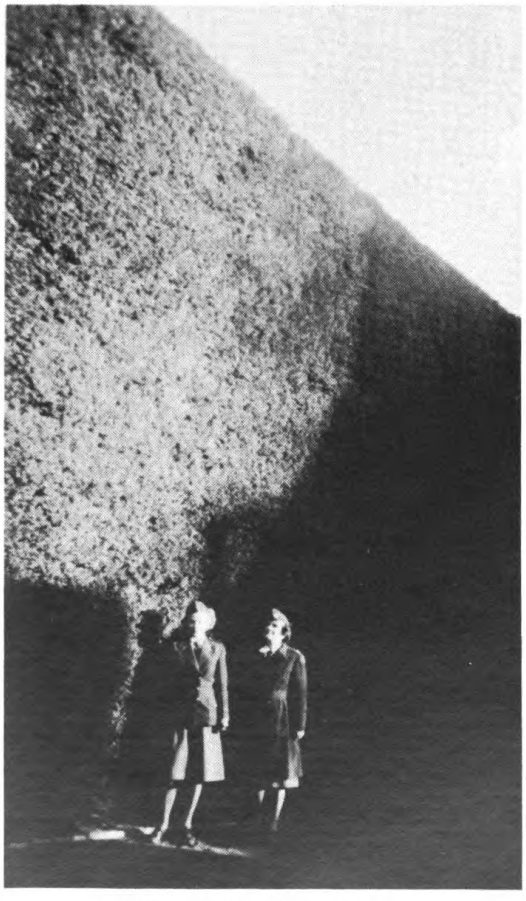
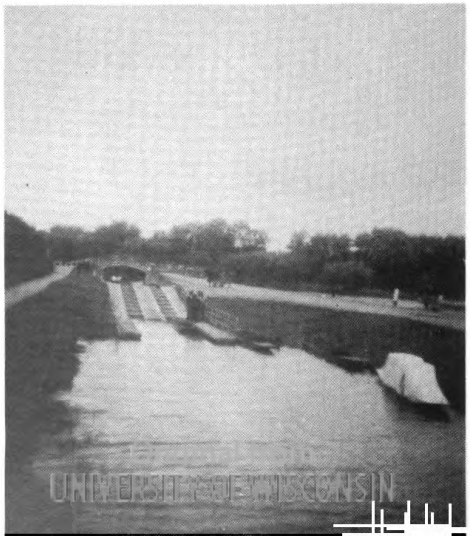
The C.O. and "The Matron" Go Cycling.

Village Street and Thatched Roof Cottage.



700-Year-Old Yew Hedge.

Lambs Have Black Feet.



Punting on the "Cher."

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the nurses than anyone else. The dog had a loveable disposition and won a place in the hearts of even luke-warm animal lovers. There was speculation about his ancestry; Merle Oberon during her U. S. O. visit, hugged him and declared that anyone could see his father had been an airedale. The great-sized paws forecast a shepherd or a Great Dane. He had some of all. The doctors called him the Hound of the Baskervilles but they were jealous. He loved ginger snaps, creme de menthe, beer and bones; when he grew up he cut out the liquor but as a pup he entertained nightly in the *Vestals' Retreat* by rattling his cup for more beer. A good deal less appreciated was his trick of running off with duty shoes (boots, to be English about it); finders of stray footgear hung it on branches of trees to be claimed by worried owners for shoes were precious as jewels. Many cats were inherited from Churchill Hospital, doctors kept finding them and their fluffy progeny sleeping with the patients. This brought forth the official frown but no one ever knew how they got there. Soldiers attracted pets, or the other way around; Army posts were full of mascots. They belonged not only to enlisted men but to top officers and often the higher the rank of the officer, the more spoiled the pet. In 1942, Dr. Dwight Fishwick, a flight surgeon, formerly of the surgical service of Presbyterian Hospital, was temporarily located at High Wycomb in a manor house where there were flower gardens, swimming pool and a lake with swan. A few friends from 2nd General were his guests one week-end and while there witnessed the decoration (bestowed by a full general) on the American Air Forces pilot who had conducted the first U. S. bombing of Germany. A huge young dog enjoyed the run of this house and his manners were no more restrained than Sooners; in one hour he was seen to chew the end of a fine rug and eat up two books.

"Doesn't anyone ever spank this big elephant?" someone wanted to know.

"Hell, no!" came the shocked reply. "That's the General's dog."

Getting to London, which was the Mecca for a soldier with leave, was like playing the childrens' game—"Going to Jerusalem;" the trains from Oxford had 28 doors none of which opened for an American, or so it seemed. The crowd rushed for the doors, the compart-

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ment seats filled and the nurses were left to stand all the way to the city. Seasoned New York subway riders should have done better, but this was not the home ground. There was an obligato of rain throughout the trip and once arrived the shivering traveller had to queue up for a taxi to reach a hotel or the Red Cross Club. No building in England was warm, just less cold than outdoors. Two nurses on official business in London one time found it necessary to ask directions. A polite man complied.

"Go down to the bottom of this street, take the first turning to the right, then round the round-about, and then up to the top of the street again where you will come to the Haymarket where, in the year la-de-da they sold hay."

The girls gasped, as much at the gratuitous information as at the dizzy directions. The man must be "having them on."

"Do we *have* to go that way?"

The man was patient; "Well ladies, I guess you do; I did not build London."

The Cheshire Cheese (of Samuel Johnson fame) was favored for luncheon. Built in 1667, its upper stories now were ragged with bombing but it continued to serve probably the best food in London and had atmosphere besides. You never could tell, sometimes Anthony Eden would come in and sit at the very same table. Though noses were powdered and the salt passed experimentally, he never gave one of them a tumble. All engrossed in the affairs of State? When other places served salmon croquettes, ham patty or pressed pork, it all turned out to be Spam which the nurses had three times a week in their own Mess. Menus were headed: "Please eat potatoes instead of bread." Three courses only. If soup and salad (when there was such a thing) were eaten, then no dessert. Marrow was a favored vegetable and welsh rarebit appeared as a sweet though there was a baffling confection of whipped cream which had to be eaten the moment it was served or it disappeared before the patron's astonished eyes.

Museums were open but had been denuded of their treasures. A lot of English history was absorbed without the benefit of midnight oil at Mme. Tussaud's Wax Works. The Historic Ministers,

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the Royal Family; Government, Ecclesiastical and Military groups; even American Presidents and Statesmen. The Duke and Duchess of Windsor were off in a corner by themselves and care had been taken not to make her too beautiful. Hitler, Göering, Hess, Mussolini, Laval and companions stood together and were labeled blandly: "A Group on a Landing." Soon they may find themselves quite at home in the Chamber of Horrors. The best place was given to Henry VIII and his unfortunate wives.

Sooner was taken into London via station wagon by Lts. Dey and Smith; he was car-sick all the way and Serg't McCabe, driving, said he thought two nurses ought to know what to do with one sick dog. He added with meaning, "Hope I never get sick!" Sooner loved the stairs in the house where they visited and, when he got the idea, wore himself out going up and down; in the streets he made the acquaintance of water hydrants and returned to Oxford not quite the yokel he had been when he left.

On the night when a few nurses with their escorts went to London to see "Du Barry was a Lady," the city was swathed in thick, smothering folds of sickly greenish-yellow fog which settled on skin and clothing like soot. Traffic had been halted, and a pedestrian could not have told if he were walking on the sidewalk or in the middle of the street; the group did not find the theatre until after the first act. Shows all started early and were out by 9 P. M. A hasty supper was eaten after the show and a stumbling sprint made for the 10 o'clock train to Oxford. In the station the guard advised; "Ten o'clock train two hours late; better take the twelve o'clock train." As the damp merrymakers were about to board the midnight train the guard said innocently—"The seven-thirty hasn't gone yet." So they took the seven-thirty and arrived in Oxford at 2 A. M. with the problem of three more miles to go in choking fog and no transportation. Hours later someone was persuaded by telephone to come for them from the Post. It was a moot question whether it was nobler, if accommodations could be found, to stay in London all night and risk the bombings or fight it out on the trains to get back to the Hospital. A porter in a hotel knocked on the door of a sleeping nurse who had decided to be noble and stay in London all night.

"Better get up, miss; there's a bit of a do outside!"

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The nurse got up and decided she had just heard the finest example of British understatement. London was rocking, smoking, and blazing with the fury of an enemy air attack.

All theater programs for London and Oxford shows bore this "Recommendation."

"You will be notified from the stage if an air raid warning has been sounded during the performance, but that does not mean that an air raid will necessarily take place. If you wish to leave for home or Official Air Raid Shelter you are at liberty to do so. All we ask is—if you feel you must go—you will depart quietly and without excitement. We recommend you remain in the theater. Don't leave your gas mask behind—we have no use for it."

As the month of November, 1942 wore on, it seemed as if the ever-present fog turned to rime coating every twig and branch of trees and shrubs until they looked like giant wedding cakes or crystal chandeliers. It was an atmospheric phenomenon—no storm or snow. A message arrived from HDQ at Cheltenham advising that "Orders" were on the way. Curiosity was allayed but excitement prevailed when "Orders" came in the form of an invitation.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE

The Master of the Household is
commanded by Their Majesties to invite

Marjorie Peto
Lieutenant A.N.C.

to an Afternoon Party on Thursday
the 26th November, 1942, at 3:15 o'clock P. M.

This was the first United States Thanksgiving Day party ever to be held at Buckingham Palace. With more than two hundred officers, twenty-five American nurses were included, five of whom were to come from 2nd General Hospital; all of them to be under Lieutenant Peto. The nurses attending from 2nd General were: Lts. Katherine Ives, Alice Lundin, Margaret Peters, Blanche Bickel and the

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Chief Nurse, Lt. Peto. It was a great relief to receive word that the King and Queen desired their tea party to be informal, guests to comport themselves as they would at a similar function in America. No curtsies. Just one request, which did not come from their Majesties but was a point of etiquette always observed—no one was to turn his or her back on the Royal Family at any time. Col. Crawford who had taken delight in warning of the intricacies involved in making the formal obeisance, now pointed out the greater hazard of walking backward into a cup of hot tea! A tremendous grooming, shampooing and pressing of uniforms took place and the big day dawned without rain—a miracle. After checking overcoats the guests assembled in a vast apartment hung with paintings and which the American nurses told each other was just like the Metropolitan Museum at home. It was a very cold room heated only by one brave little fireplace crackling away against odds. Among the United States officers present were Admiral Stark, Maj. Gen. R. P. Hartle, Maj. Gen. Spaatz, and Maj. Gen. Eaker. Among the British officers were Sir Dudley Pound, First Sea Lord; Sir Alan Brooke, Vice-Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten and Lady Mountbatten. The Prime Minister and Mrs. Churchill and their daughter Mary; Ambassador Winant. The other guests were prominent but not so easily recognized by the nurses. After a short wait the Master of the Household announced in a loud voice that guests (already queued up) would be presented to the Royal Family; as he took each card he announced the name. The King and Queen and Princesses received in the Grand Hall. On reaching the King each guest said, "How do you do, sir," and shook hands. As simple as that. The King was good-looking, easy to speak with, not stiff or formidable. As Lts. Marjorie Peto and Margaret Peters approached him, they heard him saying to an officer;—

"Judging from the papers they give me to sign, I wonder what they mean,—the paper shortage!"

The nurses told him how nice it was for them to be so honored on their Thanksgiving Day and they had a few moments of pleasant conversation when a Commander in the Royal Navy joined the group.

"What have you done to have two nice young ladies to talk to when I have none?"

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"I haven't done a thing I swear; I've just been standing here all afternoon."

It was managed nicely, this easing along; hurt no ones feelings and gave everyone a chance to speak briefly either to the King, the Queen or the young Princesses. Of course the Queen was surrounded by a flattering group of male officers. Princess Elizabeth was pretty with her naturally curling hair, nice smile but quiet, almost aloof manners; Princess Margaret Rose was bubbling with chatter. She asked Lt. Peto where she was stationed and when told said; "Do you find the people as friendly as they are in London?"

The lieutenant thought not.

"Don't you think that's because the people in London get around more?" Margaret Rose was being quite the little princess.

Ambassador Winant from under his shaggy eyebrows appeared to be watching over his fellow Americans with benignity. No one disgraced him by being inept with the teacups. In an adjoining apartment there was a long, beautifully set table from which was served tea, coffee, sandwiches, scotch and soda. The party ended with "God Save the King" and everyone went home, or somewhere else.

The American nurses went to the Red Cross Club for their Thanksgiving dinner; this club, at No. 10 Charles Street, had been opened formally on August 27 for American Women Officers. It was established mainly through the enterprise and tireless efforts of Mrs. Anthony Biddle and its hospitality was deeply appreciated by all nurses who found comfort and refuge within its doors and many came to think of it as a second home. At the opening ceremonies Mrs. Churchill had spoken with sincere warmth and appreciation of the work American nurses were doing and Lt. Peto enjoyed the honor of raising the American flag for the first time in this building. The traditional thing was being done about Thanksgiving dinner; turkey, cranberry sauce (almost unknown in England) and all the trimmings. The nurses had plenty of money with which to pay for this dinner but when it came time to settle checks they were informed quietly that their Thanksgiving dinner was a treat of the Red

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Cross Club. There was a dance after dinner with plenty of male partners and when mid-night came the nurses who were guests had forgotten to be homesick. Next day the Chief Nurse went to the Tower of London and learned more English history from the Beef-eaters and then, (to counteract, perhaps), in the evening saw Yankee Doodle Dandy; she returned to duty next day feeling that she had done pretty well with her two days leave in London and had the hope that Christmas would pass as agreeably. Other 2nd General nurses had attended Thanksgiving services in Westminster Abbey by special invitation and everyone confined to the Post at Oxford, patients and personnel of the hospital, had at least had the chance to eat heartily of the symbolic bird.

Sooner claimed the center of the stage in early December by disappearing for fourteen days, the local shelter was informed and ads put in all the papers. Even the supply sergeants in laundry trucks went looking for him; he was reported to have been seen hanging around the kitchen of a nearby camp. G. I.s loved dogs and were not above stealing them. Serg't Felger said he would look for Sooner but damned if he would call—"Here, Boopy Doop!" as the silly nurses called their enormous mascot. Sooner was found at last in the guardhouse of a adjacent camp where he had been lightening the hours of the inmates and happily accompanying them on their daily hikes. He smelled like a stable but seemed to have doubled in size and beauty; gentle but clumsy, the prodigal celebrated his return by knocking down all his old friends and whacking their shins with his powerful tail. In the *Vestals' Retreat* he promised never again to go AWOL and kept his word.

There came an inundation of Christmas packages from the States which lifted spirits sagging at the prospect of holiday season so far from home and loved ones. Not half the Christmas mail reported sunk could have been for even letters, tasting and smelling of salt water, had been rescued and were reaching destination in spite of Hitler and his U-boats. People spoke again to the Mail Officer. "Doc" Smith and the Chief Nurse went to hear carols sung by the famed boys' choir of New College Chapel whose handsome stained glass windows had never been removed. It was a privilege to attend this singing and admission was by ticket-invitation; the two Ameri-

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cans were the only non-British present. A collection was taken for "waifs and strays" whomever they may have been. One Sunday afternoon a group of 2nd General officers joined 1000 Oxford citizens at Mayor White's Christmas Carols in the Town Hall. The Town Hall, with its carved oaken dome, was a new building erected as recently as 1600. The Mayoress, accompanied by her ladies-in-attendance, wore a red velvet robe trimmed with ermine while the massive golden chain of office dragged at her neck. Everyone loves to sing whether he can or not; though the words were familiar the English tunes were different but the leader was confidence-inspiring and soon had his audience singing lustily. Americans make carols sound like hymns; the English sing them merrily—to sound like dances. The Mayor's party was voted a lot of fun.

Pantomimes for children at holiday time were the only occasions at which the English adult ever seemed to let himself go and laugh out loud. Americans would have called "Dick Whittington and His Cat" a musical comedy; the actors were far from mute. They called, "Yoo hoo!" to the children and the children yelled back. When the Cat got a thorn in his foot and didn't want it pulled out, the children sobbed noisily in sympathy. Men impersonated women in the play and Dick was a well rounded young woman dressed as a boy. The songs were known and sung by both actors and audience. It was the first light-hearted demonstration the American nurses had witnessed, for English families were sad again this year of 1942, their young men still far away in Africa and India.

It distressed Oxford citizens to see the American soldiers standing on street corners and lolling before the chemist's windows; though they had little with which to entertain invitations poured into the Hospital for Christmas week. It is a fact that few of these were accepted. The Hospital was planning diversions for its own personnel and most officers, and men also, preferred remaining on the Post to celebrate with their own friends rather than with total strangers, kind as the gesture was. Col. Crawford had a difficult time convincing the hospitably inclined people of Oxford that American boys like hanging around the drug store; that it is what they do in their own small towns at home and they are not necessarily lonesome—just "looking 'em over." There were no toys in the stores

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for children, no tinsel or bright paper wrappings, but England had quantities of luxuriant holly. A small bunch tied with a red paper bow was affixed to the bed of each patient and wreaths of it were hung at doors and windows. When the English maids saw the wreaths they squealed with horror! Wreaths in England are used only for funerals and never for festive display. From the home hospital gifts arrived to be distributed to all the nurses. Someone had the inspiration to send a box of seals, ribbons and precious fancy papers. A gift was wrapped for each of the 135 nurses, Red Cross workers and other women attached to the Hospital; each package was addressed personally and labeled: "From Santa Claus." It took a long time and was done secretly. The presents made a huge mound on a table in the Nurses' Mess where they were found on Christmas morning. The Chief Nurse felt well repaid, it was a successful surprise. She had been surprised herself and touched with a gift from the nurses—a Sheffield silver tray, an antique Bristol glass decanter and glasses to match. There was sherry in the decanter too.

On Christmas Eve carols were sung by doctors and nurses; it took an hour for two groups to cover both the medical and surgical wards. Some of the patients joined in, others cried, and some pretended not to hear—too homesick or too ill to care. In Hut 34 a stage had been built and here a Show was put on after carols. It was one of those daffy performances, clever in spots. Some of the enlisted men had good voices and sang their favorite songs well; the doctors sang and told jokes. There was a Glamorette Drill. Inspections and inspecting generals, citations and awarding of medals were burlesqued with relish. Boxes from home had contained crazy things, anything for a laugh. Plastic birds on shade-pulls became medals to hang on chests of outstanding "characters" on the Post. One sergeant was decorated for bravery because he had been afraid to remove a little mouse caught by his tail in a trap—a nurse had to do it! It was all in fun; coffee, cocoa and doughnuts made with white flour helped foster the holiday spirit.

There were two chaplains attached to the Unit, Chaplain Bosse and Chaplain Schruefer—the latter called by everyone, Father Jim. It was Chaplain Bosse who issued a "Thought for Today" every day on the Post's bulletin boards; they were selected to give inspiration

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but often afforded amusement. "Were we directed from Washington when to sow and when to reap, we should soon want bread." This "thought" was a quotation from Thomas Jefferson, and some official order or lack of one must have prompted its cynical selection. A new Chapel was finished in time for Christmas bringing deep pleasure to both chaplains. A Protestant service was held early on Christmas Eve; Mass was celebrated at mid-night. Both services well attended.

There were guests and cheer in the *Vestals' Retreat* also and it must have been dawn when Col. Crawford, Lts. Peto, Hagner and Smith opened their gifts from home in the Chief Nurse's apartment. Sooner had a wonderful time, lucky he had returned for every package contained a gift for him; a rag doll had him stopped. The funniest present anyone got was a pair of sun glasses (in this land of rain) and a box of prunes. Slips, stockings, vitamins, a Bible and a collapsible umbrella emerged from one package, the folks at home had wracked their brains! The umbrella kept Col. Crawford happy for one half hour while he tried to figure it out. In the end he told the recipient she couldn't use it, rain or no rain; she'd be "out of uniform."

Routine work made Christmas Day indistinguishable from any other day but at night there was a cocktail party which put everyone in the mood for the fine dinner served in the new Mess Hall. Tables had been set in a large horseshoe with Col. Crawford, Lt. Peto, Col. Schullinger, Lt. Mutch, Col. Hickey, Lt. Swallen, Major Booth, Lt. Knowles, and Major Moore at the head. There was music. Turkey with dressing, white rolls, salad and plum pudding, all delicious. The cooks were called out and given a hand. A toast was drunk to Col. Parsons and to the Presbyterian contingent in Africa; another toast to the people at home. The Red Cross workers had labored to make it a Merry Christmas for the patients who also had an excellent dinner; English music hall entertainers put on two performances for their amusement. There were wounded heroes on the wards who had received citations while in the Hospital; good news was told to them—they were scheduled to go home. Reaction was different; many did not want to go home, they wanted to get back in the scrap and take a poke at the fellow that had got them. Not exactly the words they used.

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On the Bulletin Board:

Dec. 23, 1942

HEADQUARTERS
VIII Fighter Command
Office of the Commanding General

To: The Surgeon, 2nd General Hospital

The Commanding General, Officers and men of the VIII Fighter Command wish to send the Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for a Successful New Year.

Frank O'D Hunter
Brigadier General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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England – Oxford

Part Three

On February 15, 1943, there was a birthday celebration to mark the Unit's first year in the Army. The "Journal Club" invited the nurses to see the moving pictures (A History of 2nd General Hospital) taken by Major Sloan. Pictures of: Unit members looking sad and determined that scorching day they embarked on the Duchess of Bedford loaded down with more pounds of duffle than any of them ever hoped to have to carry again; an eerie scene on board—just life-belts moving about in the fog; the ship coming into the bombed harbor of Liverpool; Churchill Hospital and all the additions since it became 2nd General; operations in the O. R. and some prize patients; rounds on wards and even quick shots of that playful pup, Sooner. While the sun seldom shone in England there were gorgeous sunsets and Major Sloan's scenic numbers tactfully skipped the rain-soaked landscape. In each spectator's mind was a looking forward to the day when the films could be shown to the folks at home. On Saturday the 20th, a big dance was given—still by way of celebration.

War in the air increased in tempo with this difference—German cities more and more were at the receiving end. In London static water tanks had been built over deep craters made by enemy bombs; buildings were shored up with sand bags, windows filled in with brick, entrances and exits hidden behind concrete reinforcements. Devastated areas were roped off. Anti-aircraft guns were mounted on high walls surrounding important places and barrage balloons floated over the bedeviled city. Unless entirely bombed out, stores and businesses functioned as usual; theaters remained open, actors carried on and audiences sat stoically through many an air raid. The English cast playing in Oscar Wilde's *Ideal Husband* was magnificent one night, not a line was dropped nor an inflection shaded while the Jerries overhead played their fun and games with vicious intensity. Whenever an armada of Flying Fortresses in close formation passed over the Hospital headed for Germany the buildings and the grounds

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shook with vibrations. It was voted that the folks at home would have to buy a staggering number of bonds to pay for this display of power. A flight of this magnitude meant a night of operating to the doctors and nurses. Sometimes a lone plane would come limping home in the wee small hours; it was easy to detect a motor that had been shot to pieces. Nurses declared that a single plane in trouble would wake them up; they would sit up in bed, listen, and pray that the pilot would reach his destination safely.

There were POWs in the Hospital now, German and Italian. The older Germans were arrogant and sullen; the younger, fanatical. Prisoners were treated well, there was a hope that the news of it would reach Germany and influence the care of our own captured fighting men. It was difficult to dislike one Italian prisoner, a general. Asked how he had been captured, he replied simply that he had been retreating from the English in Africa and had walked right into the arms of the Americans. He amused the nurses by his valiant efforts to master the English tongue. The Chief Nurse explained to him one day that her big dog was only a puppy.

"What's this poppy?" he demanded. "Is a flower, yes? Is a dog, yes? Is a Papa, yes?" He threw up his hands to indicate what he thought of such a language.

At all times patients (not prisoners) had plenty of visitors; English girls flocked into the Hospital to entertain the poor wounded American soldiers. They clung to the men's arms like old friends and if they could pick up a husband, that was a bit of all right. The Red Cross investigated girls intending to marry men in the detachment; three of four were acceptable—the fourth had a police record. One ward man wrote home:

Dear Mom and Pop;

Sit down before you read this letter. I am married. You will soon be grandparents. I will be sending home for money and I don't know what to tell my girl at home.

Your loving son—

"Can you think of any other way I can put it?" he appealed to one of the nurses. The nurse said she couldn't.

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By the last of February the frozen fog, rime, melted from trees and bushes and suddenly it was spring in the tight little isle. On Sooner's P.M.s he was taken for romps over Shotover Hill; roads were bordered with holly hedges, the bushes loaded with fat red berries about to burst. Wild primroses, violets, and yellow crocuses came to full bloom overnight. To nurses on leave in the Cotswolds the tiny stone thatched-roof cottages rambling along each side of the road made the villages seem like something made for a child to play with; while riding their bicyles (often around a friendly cow or two) they expected to see toy trains come tearing around the next bend in the road; was this fairyland or was an Empire State building and a Fifth Avenue the make-believe?

There appeared on the Chief Nurse's bulletin board about this time a notice which occasioned some mirth but to which many subscribed their names.

NOTICE

1. Please come to the Office to sign for furniture in your room. General Supply is taking it over from Medical Supply.
2. All nurses, dietitians, P. T. Aids, are to be called Lt. from now on.
3. The overseas cap is never to be worn with Class A uniform.
4. There *is* a dance this Saturday night.
5. Sign here if you want manure for your garden.

The days in March were getting longer, the nurses were playing tennis after supper. Gardens were started for a surprising number of nurses had brought vegetable and flower seeds from home. Carrots, lettuce, tomatoes, Bermuda onions, wax and string beans were sown; some intended to try corn but the local farmer said there was not enough sun to ripen corn and no one disbelieved him. The English call wheat corn (that led to arguments) and they maintained that stringless beans could not be string beans, now could they? Stringless beans were unknown to them. The Chief Nurse went in for flowers; having met with horticultural let-downs before, she asked the market man suspiciously—"Will these delphiniums grow for me?"

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"They will grow anywhere for anyone."

It seemed true. When Easter came the land was abloom. No English garden was too small to include a patch for old-fashioned posies; cabbages swelled to spectacular girth on squares of soil that could have been covered with a small handkerchief. Church bells throughout England rang again and people frankly cried at hearing them; there were no Easter bonnets and only shabby clothes but there were primroses, violets, daffodils for every bosom. In the Hospital two eggs each for breakfast, a friendly gesture of the English, spared from their own meager supply. Powdered eggs had begun to pall. The C. O. had tried to raise chickens on the Post but so many coupons were required for their feed, the scheme had been abandoned. There were six tulips at every table in the mess hall. At noon—steak, lettuce, mashed potatoes and ice cream. G. I. supper, though,—Spam and beans.

Bombs dropped but England doggedly celebrated Shakespeare's Birthday with commemoration parties in both Stratford-on-Avon and Oxford. Mr. E. W. Attwood, of Oxford, requested the pleasure of the company of Miss Peto "AT WINE" in "THE PAINTED ROOM," Saturday, April 24th. The invitation was accepted and she wrote of this party:

There were sixteen guests; Col. Kneeland and I went from 2nd General. We met in Mayor White's Parlour and again she was attired in the official red velvet robe and golden necklace. A man brought in the Mace, a gold staff surmounted by a crown with four jeweled emblems—the rose for England, the thistle for Scotland, the harp for Ireland and the fleur-de-lis for France. This Mace was given to Oxford in 1660 by Charles II. I was invited to hold it and the weight almost threw me! In ancient days it was used to clear the road for processions and that is exactly what it did now. The Birthday is a holiday in Oxford, the streets were jammed and traffic was stopped. Coming out of the Town Hall the Mace bearer led the way with Mayor White following; the rest of us followed by twos. Mayor White's sister and Lord Samuel, Col. Kneeland with Lord Thrushbottom, and I walked with a civilian doctor from the United States. Down Cornmarket Street, across the Carfax (the 42nd St. and B'way

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of Oxford) where we had our pictures taken. Then in to the ancient Tavern, built in 1350, where "Bill" (they speak of him familiarly over here) used to stop on his trips from Stratford to London and back. In 1927 the Tavern became town property. There is a law which states how the walls of old buildings are to be treated for sanitary and preservative reasons; it was while working on the building that Mr. Attwood discovered the "Painted Room." Experts since have uncovered the original murals and declare them to have been set as early as 1550. There were speeches. Lord Samuel thanked Mr. Attwood and praised the Bard. Capt. Quentin Hogg thanked Mr. Attwood, said appropriate things about the celebration, and ended his address this way: "The church bells have rung! We have been delivered out of danger but we have paid a bitter price and will have to pay a greater price before we are through." Prof. Arthur Newell spoke for the Americans: "We are infants as a nation when we listen to the history of this room." A toast was drunk in wine to the "immortal memory of William Shakespeare." Long-stemmed clay pipes, such as were used in the period, were given as souvenirs; the men guests took some puffs but I was relieved to find lady guests were not expected to participate in that part of the ceremony though our pictures were taken again holding the pipes.

The thing to do on May Day when in Oxford is to go to Magdalen (prounounced Mawdlin) College Bridge over the Cherwell (pronounced Char) and listen to the college choir sing at dawn from the top of Magdalen College Tower. Some of the nurses did and found themselves in a crowd of workers who had risen extra early in order not to miss the traditional observances. Following the singing everyone flocked to Radcliff Square to see the dances put on by the English Folk Dance Society. The dancers were men who wore white flannels, colored ribbon suspenders and bells tied on their legs with multi-colored ribbon rosettes; they flourished handkerchiefs and sticks while executing intricate figures of the dance—queer capers for the staid English. Returning to the Hospital at 8 A. M., the shivering nurses warmed up with hot coffee before going on duty and speculated on what they had seen. One said she had asked three Oxford citizens the significance of the singing and dancing; none knew. The girls wondered if the English people always knew why

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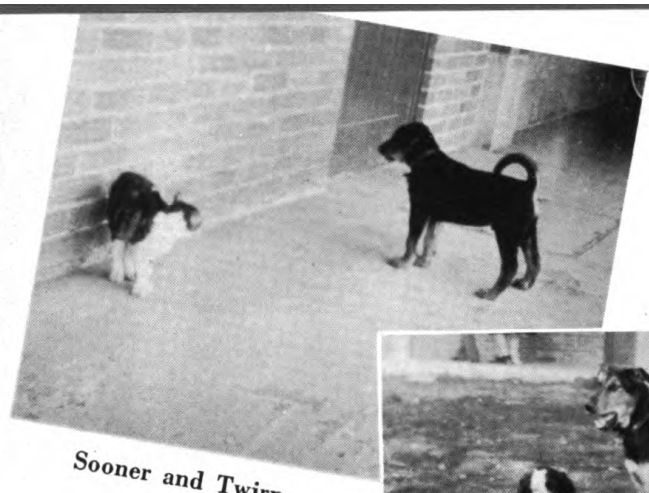
Sooner Arrives.



Sooner and Twirp.

Sooner and Finn.

Sooner as a Lap Dog.

Mrs. Woods
and Sooner.

Dave Habif and Janie.

Evie on (not in) Doghouse.

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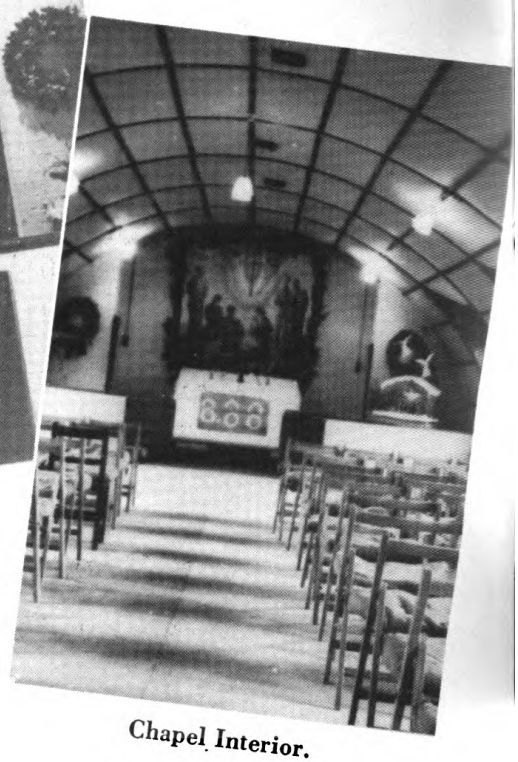
Altar of Chapel Christmas Eve.



Chapel Interior.

Christmas—Ward 20

Christmas in Vestals' Retreat.

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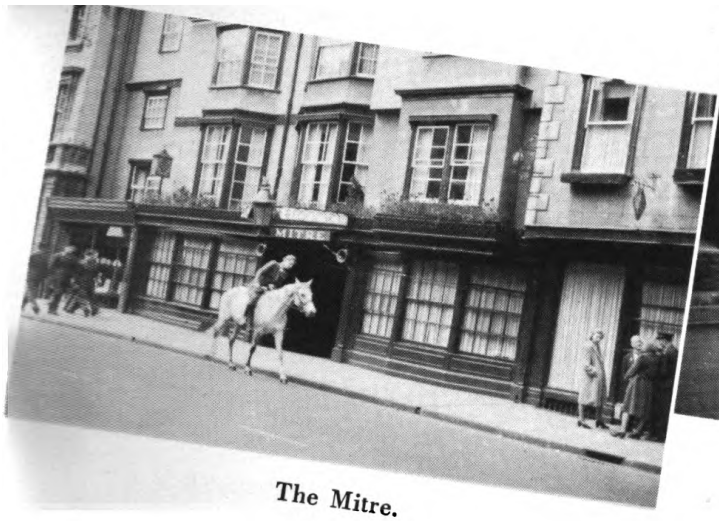
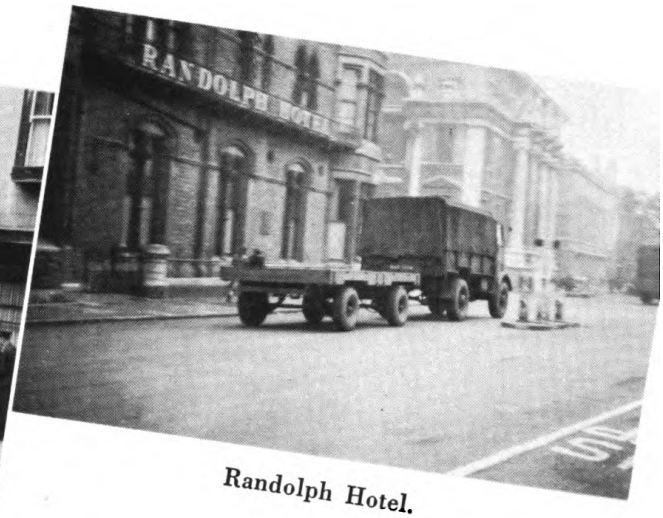
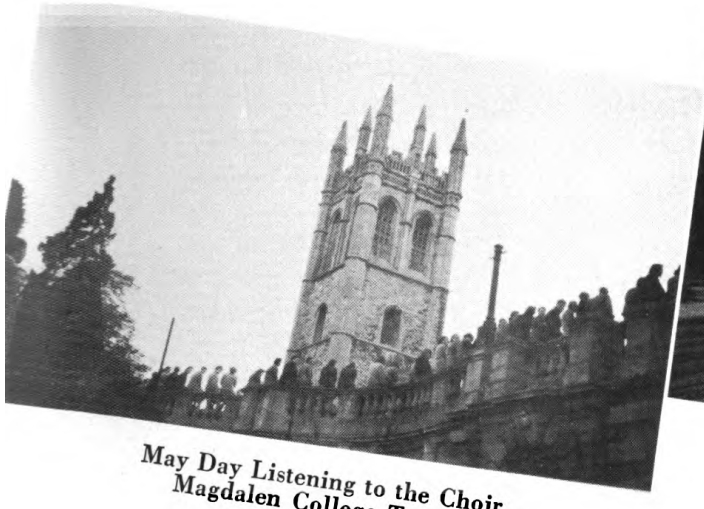


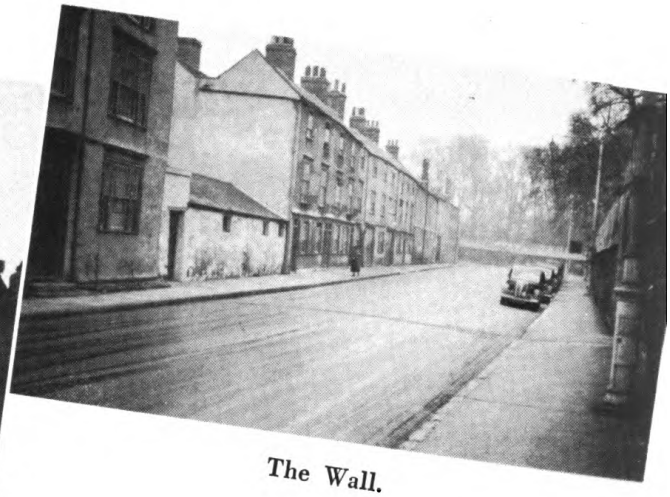
The Mitre.



Randolph Hotel.



May Day Listening to the Choir
Magdalen College Tower.



The Wall.

Station with Name Removed—to
Fool Invaders.

The Camera.

The Bus for Headington.

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The Mace Bearer Leads the Way in the Shakespearian Celebration.

Crossing a River on Two Ropes. Training at the Battle School for Nurses.

Exercises at the Battle School.

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they did the things they did!

Orders came sending Lt. Peto for three weeks training at the American School Center in Shrivenham, a "Battle School for Nurses." Its motto was: "Better than the Best." Thirty nurses from American military hospitals in the British Isles got the works there! Starting at 5 A. M. they stood inspection, had foot drill, fought fires, learned about booby traps and poisonous gases. In the beginning (this was the first class) the curriculum was indefinite and subject to change. The Chief Nurse of 2nd General thought much time and energy was wasted on tasks which already would have been part of every nurse's elementary training. She wrote to her friends:

Drilled in cold rain and sat in class four hours with wet feet. Learning how to cook a chicken (I've seen three since coming over here) which trick I was taught twenty years ago in Manual Training High School; if the instructor would show how to make a palatable omelette out of powdered eggs, I could run home and teach Casey. Outdoor activities are more fun and more useful (I hope) than the boring classes. Yesterday I learned to climb a tree and cross a river on two ropes strung twenty feet above the water; the trick is to hold on one rope and walk on the other. By putting a stretcher on a pulley a patient was pulled over. I was the patient. Then a lecture on booby traps, how to detect them and how to neutralize them; the instructor had me walk into one, a torture thing. Of course this one was a "blank" but it went off with realistic bang. You can see how bored I must have been to be such a willing booby. Anent the gas instructions one nurse said; "If I ever get gased, I'll take one deep breath and lie down; it seems easier that way."

Another letter written from the School Center on May 20th:

I am a captain! It seems I have been one since April 1st, but the news just reached me last night when someone knocked at my door after mid-night, told me and congratulated me. I always thought when you got a promotion in the Army you got kissed on both cheeks and wine glasses were broken. I wanted to talk but there was no one to talk to so I lay back and counted sheep. If I live to get back, I'll be a better Chief Nurse.

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Then, on May 24th—still from the School Center:

Up at 5 A. M. to scrub my floor with scouring powder, polish my shoes, then dress for Inspection. Some of the students got demerits for dull buttons but to my eyes they were bright. I have a demerit for having my helmet strap inside instead of outside and I got three demerits the other day for something my shoes did. The rooms were microscoped; everything must be in proper place and folded as directed. Then drill for an hour; an exam on gases and how to inspect a mess. I've just learned, too, how to wash dishes. At one time I thought I was a nurse. Col. Crawford wants to come to my graduation, hope I am not in the guardhouse, demerits seem so easy to get. Had an alert last night; we had to get up, dress, and sit in the Hall. The English stay in bed until the bombs fall about their ears—we do things the hard way. The *Stars and Stripes* said today: "War in Africa Stale News." Wish the whole thing was stale news!

Graduation exercises, without fond parents, took place May 29. The Invocation was by Post Chaplain Fleischer; there were addresses by army officers and Lt. Emelie Jonsen, ANC, sang the National Anthem. At 2nd General there was a cocktail-dinner-dance the day the graduate arrived "home"; the clever hands of Lt. Mary Swallen had made Chinese lanterns of wrapping paper, hand-decorated; these, with lots of flowers from the gardens, made the party an especially gay and pretty one. Sooner was crazy with joy. Next day the new captain called a meeting in the Common Room to break the news. From now on, no civilian clothes to be worn on or off the Post—nurses to be strictly G. I.—no more of those nice, form-fitting sweaters. A tightening of Regulations all along the line. At supper that night Lt. Margaret Armstrong appeared in slacks and a pink angora sweater and was hurt when greeted with hisses and boos; she was on night duty, had not attended the meeting and was ignorant of the news. Most of the nurses thought "our Petie" was being just a bit "Army" because she had been to school! They refused to believe there could be such hocus-pocus over one undone button. A lecture by Col. Crawford convinced them that someone wasn't fooling; he directed them to salute properly both indoors and outdoors and to keep "in uniform" at all times. There was to be a stepped-up

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drilling program with Capts. Peto and Nelson. Fourteen nurses from 2nd General received training in the next three months at the American School Center; Lt. Mutch drilled and scrubbed her way through without demerits but she wrote back to her friends: "*Please* don't forget to come for me July 3rd."

In June Capt. Peto and Lt. Laura Smith went to Scotland on leaves. It was cold and rainy but the country was beautiful and the fields were full of red poppies. In Prince's Street Gardens, Edinburgh, couples danced when the weather permitted, just as couples did in Central Park. From the high prominence on which stood Edinburgh Castle the whole city could be seen; objects of interest in the Castle had been removed for safe keeping but guides continued to take people around the building. There was one elaborate contraption the young women were sure had been used in olden days to lower knights in armor onto their steeds; they assured each other they had seen its like in the Metropolitan Museum. They were so curious they appealed to the Scottish guide; he told them patiently it was a pulley-platform used by the cleaning people when they dusted the ceiling. After that the two nurses listened and made no more guesses. Before a War Memorial to the lads and lassies of World War I, stood a group of East Indian soldiers uniformed like the British Tommies plus turbans; while the epitaphs were being translated for them, they were busy ogling and winking at the nurses. In Holyrood Castle the very spot where Rizzio, Mary's over-confident secretary, had been stabbed to gory death, was pointed out and hungry as the girls were they decided that was one fine dinner they were glad not to have attended. Next, the ruins of what had been a beautiful cathedral showed it had been as effectively destroyed by Cromwell as any blown up by Jerry. An antique bowl of copper luster was purchased in John Knox's house while the custodian complained of skepticism—he said people wanted to know how he knew this was the home of the great Presbyterian. The Scottish physician to whom the two friends had a letter of introduction hospitably showed them around the grim, gray stone City Hospital. Wonder was expressed how an architect could have planned an edifice with so little thought given to the heating problem in that cold climate, or so little concern exercised for the convenience of the nursing per-

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sonnel. These were the thoughts of the soft, "steam-heated Americans" and undoubtedly the doctor's wife who gave them tea thought his insistence on a fire in the sitting room for his chilled guests sheer folly. Walking back to their hotel through streets of unbelievable squalor the nurses thought that if any good could come of bombing, perhaps it would be the rebuilding of some famous, or infamous, slum districts in Edinburgh, Glasgow and London. Wearily, for sightseeing has its own special fatigue, the two nurses were finishing their dinner and telling each other that bed at 8 o'clock was going to be just dandy when a pleasant-looking British colonel appeared at their table and asked for a dance. It seemed he had a friend and the "so-tired-I-could-die" girls found themselves dancing until midnight and liking it.

With the lifting of the ban on marriages in the ANC there were many weddings celebrated in 2nd General, especially during the summer months of 1943. The little Chapel was made fragrant with flowers; one or other of the chaplains officiated and Col. Crawford, or one of the other officers, gave the brides away. All the grooms were in some branch of the services with the Air Corps, perhaps, leading. The brides-to-be and their nearest friends performed miracles with yards of filmy white curtain material, the only goods available in England not requiring coupons; gowns and veils were fashioned of it. One of the dietitians, Lt. Swingle, who had a lovely voice sang at all the weddings. Streamers, "Just Married" signs, and the inevitable tin cans, trimmed a jeep in which the happy couple of the day would be taken for a "tour" of the Post. It was almost like riding down Main Street at home, on the way to the station and a honeymoon at Niagara! The cooks managed wedding cakes, even if they had to be made of brown flour; the outsides were glorified with silver lace paper someone had found in a local shop. These wartime nuptials were as decorative and as festive as friends and well-wishers could make them. The succession of weddings, dances, trips to historic shrines and leaves to London is only part of the story of this particular medical unit overseas—the happy part. It is not the purpose of this narrative to relate the unhappy aspects but tragedy and sorrow overtook members of the Unit, descending pitilessly on young people who in the natural course of living could

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have looked forward to years of normal life and happiness. Intimate personal desolations, including news of the loss or grave illness of dear ones at home, had to be borne somehow, alone and without the solace of family nearness; to their everlasting credit it can be said the stricken nurses carried on like soldiers. It was fortunate there was little time for self-pity; there was increasing activity on the wards and much work to be done.

On July 13, 1943, the Unit Diary notes: "First news of Allies in Sicily. Maybe we will be home by this page next year."

As for summer leaves in 1943, transportation was almost impossible. The Isle of Wight was made available this season but the British would-be vacationers stood on endless queues waiting for the means to get there short of swimming. Eastern beaches were a restricted area. Some of the nurses went to Torquay and Bournemouth but their sandy beaches were mined and fenced about with barbed-wire. "Anyway," wrote one of the girls, "anyone crazy enough to swim in England's ocean in August will end up in the frostbite ward!"

In the middle of August, 2nd General was host to the Convention of the American Medical Association; 250 doctors and surgeons gathered from all sectors of the ETO. A huge circus tent went up on the Quadrangle and the C. O. was as busy as a housewife. There were patients ready for evacuation to the States which allowed four wards to be made ready and assigned to the visiting doctors. It was arranged that the visitors would eat in the nurses' mess and a great weight seemed lifted from the C. O.'s mind when the nurses further volunteered to act as waitresses and receptionists. Dr. Allan O. Whipple from Presbyterian Hospital flew to Britain to be present at this convention and never was a man so overwhelmed with greetings, handshakes and questions about the folks "back home" and New York. He seemed equally glad to meet all his old friends and presented them with gifts of precious lemons. The lectures at the Convention were intensely interesting and everyone crowded in to hear Col. Eliot Cutler, Chief Surgical Consultant for the ETO, talk on: "My Trip to Moscow." Col. Cutler explained that he had seen many things in Russia but in spite of apparent frankness he felt he had seen only what the Russians had wanted him to see. The nurses re-

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acted to what he had to say of Russian women in the war. Russian doctors were not permitted to function near active zones but were kept well to the rear; women, however, were expendable. Sturdy Russian women crawled on hands and knees right up to the firing lines, snatched wounded men as they fell, put them on their backs and crawled back with their burdens to the First Aid Stations. The listening nurses hoped the recital of this accomplishment would not give their officers ideas! The Russians have a robust humor not always recognized as such by the English or the Americans. Col. Cutler said he was solemnly warned that it would not be safe to venture forth at night alone, Russian women had not seen their men in such a long time they were pretty aggressive when hunting company. One day when he was being driven by some Russian officials through heavily wooded country, an Amazonian figure stepped out of the woods into the road dragging two big, newly hewn pine trees, an arm about each. She looked hearty and so eager the Colonel decided then that perhaps the Russians weren't joking; friends or enemies, their women might play too rough.

MEMORANDUM:

To : The Chief Nurse.

I. Will you please convey to all the nurses my appreciation of their whole-hearted efforts in helping to make the Medical Meeting at this hospital an outstanding success. I am especially grateful to the nurses who served the noonday meals to the officers in their mess; also to the nurses who volunteered for duty as receptionists and worked long and faithfully in registering the large number of visiting officers. The response to the request for hostesses at the dance was highly gratifying. There were many favorable comments on the spirit of our entire organization and the gracious hospitality and uniform courtesy shown the visitors. I am very proud of all our nurses.

P. M. Crawford
Colonel, M. C.
Commanding

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England — Oxford

Part Four

On August 19, 1943, Lt. Ada Mutch left 2nd General to join the 121st Station Hospital as Chief Nurse. On the 23rd, there was an inspection by General Devers who spoke to the doctors and nurses in the Chapel afterward. There were as many inspections as dances and more drills than both put together. One diary noted: "Too bad our drills do not get photographed, we were darn sharp today before we marched into the Land Army girl and her wheelbarrow." Of considerable interest to the nurses was the projected change from blue to khaki uniforms; since February they were said to have been on the way but it was not until September that Capt. Peto received orders to send in her list of detailed sizes "without delay." She was working painstakingly on the list when the trucks arrived.

"But I've not yet mailed my list!" she protested to the sergeant in charge of delivery.

"This is it!" came the answer. And it was.

"Queue up! Hut 34."

The struggle of the big girls to get garments that would meet in all the desirable places was not any more desperate than the tight-lipped determination of the petite ones to secure sizes that would not make them look as if the convention tent had collapsed over their 10 and 12 size figures. Tiny Lt. Ruth Owens patiently stood in line two hours and when her turn came said pleadingly, "*Please* may I have size 32?"

The sergeant was charm proof that day; "We got 36, 38, 40—which d'yer want?"

Some slipped neatly into the new uniforms, others complained that the shoulder bag was the only thing that fitted. All were delighted to have a place to put things. No woman ever should be asked to live without a pocketbook—none had been permitted with the blue uniform. Much needed raincoats were issued, all one size and

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cumbersome; on the smaller frames the sartorial effects were grotesque. Much later the brown and white seersucker, dress and jacket for hospital duty, arrived. The all important brown shoes, required with OD uniforms, did not show up until the third week in October! In the interim about forty nurses were lining the soles of their black shoes with folds of newspaper to keep their feet from being literally on the ground. There were wise-cracks about Valley Forge. New nurses and some on DS (detached service) had been added to the Unit and they could not get uniforms to fit them. Jackets came with WAC buttons; a few nurses stripped their overcoats of one row of buttons to bring their jackets "in uniform." Drills went on. White uniforms appeared with either navy blue or OD sweaters; both white or beige stockings and white or black shoes were worn, according to what the wearer had. Some wore capes. A visiting general saw this heterogeneously outfitted group drilling one day and, outraged, he sounded off to HDQ; to the bewilderment of everyone he charged that the nurses of 2nd General were drilling in "sun suits." HDQ called up the Chief Nurse to ask about it and was told of the situation—how they had a lot of everything that did not match, uniforms, shoes, stockings, but definitely no sun suits. In her office with her head clasped in her hands, the Chief Nurse pondered what could be done about it. Casey came in, looked at her and asked solicitously if she felt as well as the average sick person. A messenger-corporal, delivering mail, said she had nothing to worry about—look at him—he was paying $500. a month alimony! Then the Mess Officer popped in and offered cheer.

"The queen bee is a great big tease
She drills her girls in B.V.D.s
A General peeked; let out a yell
His lovely Army was going to ----!"

"Oh, go away!"

A meeting was called to find out what part of the uniform each nurse had in common; all but sixteen had overcoats. Next day they drilled in overcoats. In time the shoes arrived.

An international day of "Prayer for Peace" was observed in England on September 3—Liberation Day. Cold, gloomy weather with

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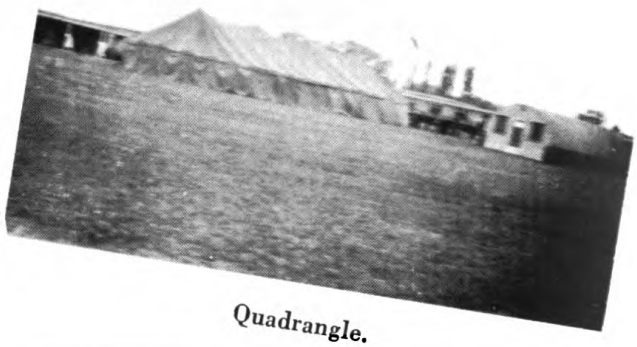
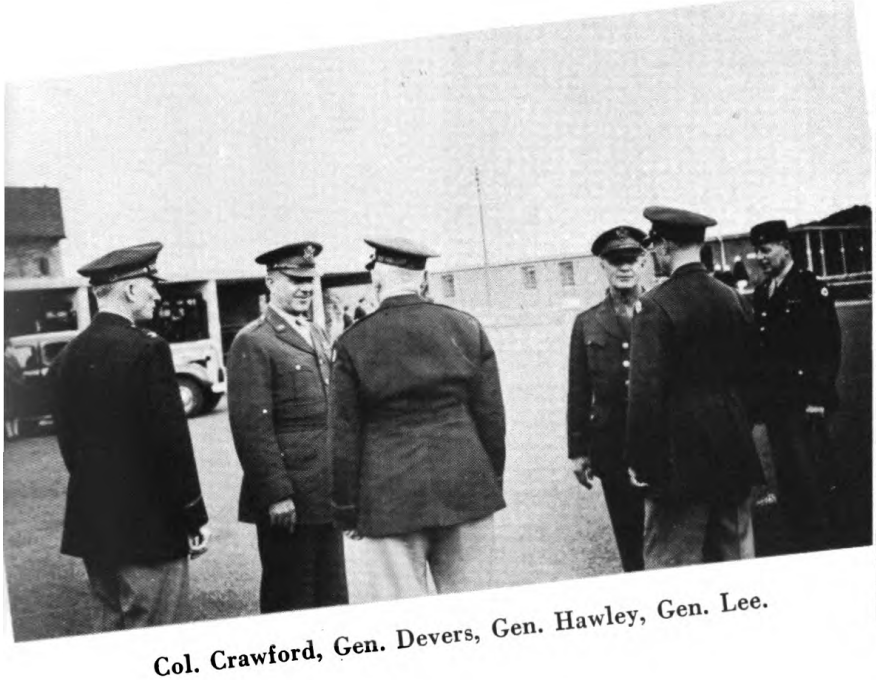
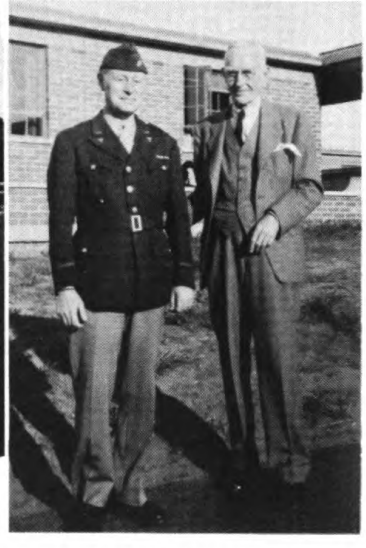
Convention Tent.



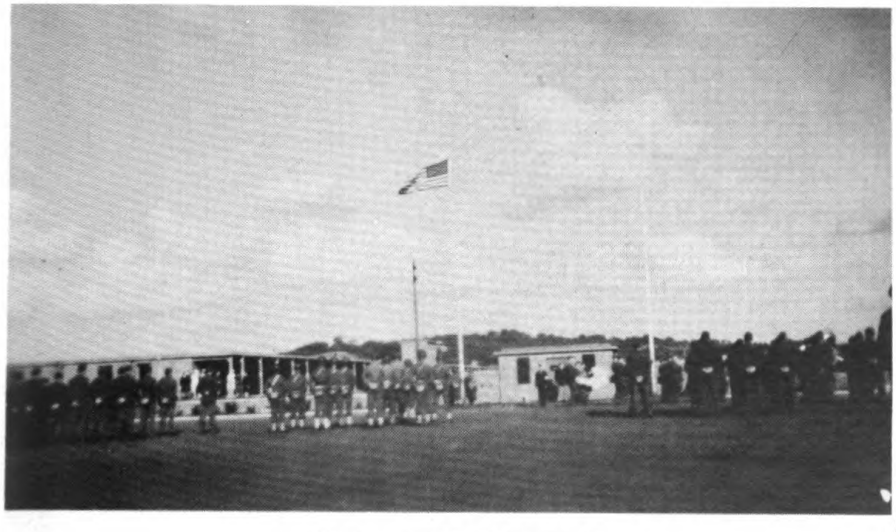
Quadrangle.



Col. Crawford, Gen. Devers, Gen. Hawley, Gen. Lee.



Col. Schullinger and
Dr. Allan O. Whipple.



Retreat at 2nd General.

The C. O.

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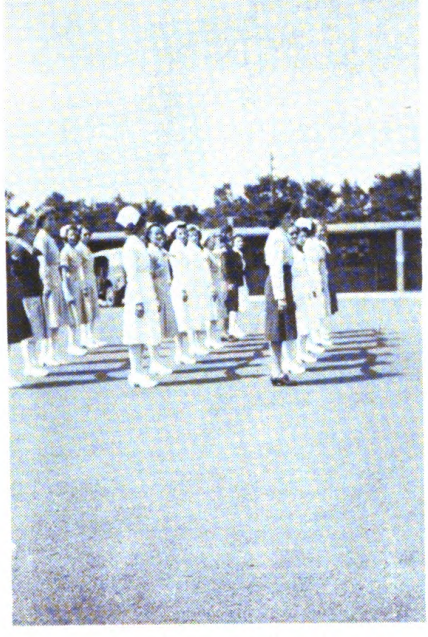
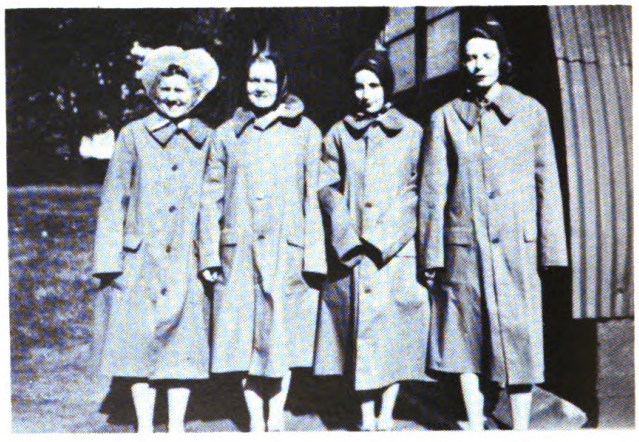
Drill!



According to What the Wearer Had.



Raincoats—Army Size.

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the sun coming out only long enough to shine on the flag at Retreat. Since the Medical Convention the flag had flown on the tall flagpole on the Post all day; before that it was considered too good a target and had been both raised and lowered at Retreat. The Post's bugler was an earnest soldier who took his duty seriously but his bugling lacked something, mostly the right notes, nor did he improve noticably with practise. His earnestness nearly cost him his life a little later in the war. The news over BBC on Liberation Day said the British and Canadians had invaded Italy early that morning, exactly on the 4th anniversary of England's declaration of war against Germany. This was the prelude for the greatest piece of news in the war so far: On September 8, General Eisenhower announced—"ITALY HAS SURRENDERED!" The *Stars and Stripes* reported that New York was having the biggest celebration since Lindbergh flew the Atlantic. Much whoopee in 2nd General that night; in the *Vestals' Retreat* bets were laid on the end of the war. A number of the enlisted men in the Unit were of Italian birth or extraction who had parents and relatives in Italy; they were emotionally thankful at the turn of events. Jimmy Cuneo, who among other duties acted as hairdresser to the nurses, that having been his profession at home, was so excited he did some queer hair-dos that week. Jimmy, a loyal American for many years, had left Italy as a child; he declared his mother had been right when she said—"That Mussolini! No good can come of starting a war on Good Friday; and what but bad luck should strike a man who made honest Italian women give up their wedding rings!"

The last week in September the Chief Nurse, who had resolved to go to Penzance for her next seven-day leave, wrote the Queen's Hotel for reservations for two nurses and received the usual sorry-no-rooms refusal. As it was the end of so-called summer it seemed as if the resort should not be overcrowded. Col. Crawford suggested writing again and using the signature "Matron of Churchill Hospital" instead of "Chief Nurse of 2nd General Hospital." The second application was made and reservations arrived promptly. To save a precious day of vacation the nurses travelled at night but the trip was an endurance contest for the train was crowded and took fourteen hours to reach destination. Because of proximity to the Channel

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even blackout curtains were not trusted and most of the time no light at all was permitted; the compartment was shared with a British sailor in the submarine service, a soldier in the Tank Corps, and an R.A.F. gunner. It was impossible to sleep, not only because of pretzel-like positions, but because at every station the compartment door was opened by people with flashlights looking for seats; they would be told—"Full up, mate!" and the door would slam again. The sailor abandoned all hope of sleep, uncoiled his long legs and decided to entertain the others by giving imitations of all the different English accents; his companions politely told him he was a card but when the nurses told him they could not make out his own accent he was dumbfounded.

"Why, I'm a clear-spoken man, myself!" he exclaimed.

The train, due in Penzance at 7:30 A. M. arrived at 10 A. M., and the porter at the hotel greeted the two guests by saying it was nice to see people wide awake and cheerful so early in the morning, which must have been a Cornishman's joke for the travellers were rumpled, droopy-eyed and cross. The Queen's Hotel, on the concrete Promenade, faced the sea with St. Michael's Mount on one side and the fishing village of Newlyn on the other. The Morrab Gardens, once a show place of floral beauty, were full of useful cabbages but fuchsia bushes, tall as small trees, were still in bloom. The bandstand by some hurried magic had been converted into a static water tank.

In peacetime the resort hummed with chatter of vacationers, laughter of children and was a lure for artists; now, no painting or photographing was allowed. It never had been a Coney Island; to those who like their ocean with a facade of hamburger, hot dog and ice cream stands spaced with shooting galleries, this would be a disappointment. At New York beaches in September the bathing is ideal, the water warmed by a hot summer sun; here, the girls did not want to risk the tangled, rusty barbed-wire, the eels, the cold and the inevitable remarks about the crazy Americans, but it was the first time they had felt beach sand under feet or seen the ocean, except from a train in Scotland, since landing at Liverpool. It seemed good. At St. Ives, reached by bus, the main industry was fishing, the boats still went out, and it was true about the cats—they were

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everywhere. In 1595 the Spaniards burned the villages in and around Penzance, the only place that remained to tell of the "genius of the old men of Cornwall" was the Keigwin Arms (now occupied by a private family) in Mousehole (pronounced Muzzle). Instead of whitewash the brick and the stone houses of the villages had been tinted with a pink or a blue wash, making them less austere than the gray stone houses in Scotland and yet, even covered with an ivy that turns red in autumn, the effect and actuality is cold. The bus lurched down through the narrow main street lined with dwellings draped with fish nets and dotted with cats, a street originally laid out for passage of one horse and rider. Could Dick Turpin or Tom King have gone this way on their nefarious business? On alighting the nurses were surrounded by curious and unkempt citizens; a tatterdemalion old salt with bright hopeful eyes asked the strangers what they wanted to see.

"What is there to see?"

"Like to see a pirate's cave?" he tempted.

They tramped, accompanied by Kim the old man's dog, over hills and fields that in peacetime are covered with flowers that "make the hillside sweet with scent"—so a poet sings; now it reeked with over-ripe brussels sprouts. The quartette came to a cave in the cliff that looked for all the world like a cave in any other cliff; it extended a mile underground and came out at a remote farmhouse. The pirates, smugglers, trunks of jewels, pieces-of-eight and skulls-and-cross-bones had to be imagined but the guide was rewarded with a package of American cigarettes and seemed satisfied. Kim had liked the expedition. The hills of Cornwall are filled with semi-precious stones and there were shops where jewelry could be bought; however, there was the hundred-per-cent government tax and when the shopkeepers recognized the American uniform the tariff went up still another notch. Back in Mousehole at an inn with a balcony overlooking the sea, the hungry nurses were served hot tea and cake. Unable to eat the cake because it was covered with thick greenish mold, but not wishing to hear mutterings about the "wasteful Americans," a handful of crumbs was surreptitiously thrown over the railing; before the scraps reached the rocks below clouds of screaming

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gulls snatched at them and at each other in a fury of sound and whirlwind movement.

"The waitress is bending an ear—we may be arrested," whispered the guilty nurse.

Another whole day was spent at Land's End, not because there was anything to do at the place but because the bus went off and left the nurses there. The only large building had been blitzed either by the Luftwaffe or by Cromwell, such a thorough job it was difficult to tell. Walking on the moors along the edge of the cliff, making believe the sun was sparkling on the clear water, was pleasant; five airplanes swooped down at different times to take a look at the moving figures. At Sneddon the girls got a lift back to Penzance on the baker's wagon.

"Cornwall is lovely, but you don't have to fret your life away if you never get here," wrote one of the nurses; "just go take another good look at the cliffs along the North Shore of Long Island."

Everywhere in England during the fall of 1943 the question was heard—is there anyone left in the U. S. A? Supplies and troops were pouring on the island in seemingly endless streams and Britain's own military strength was swelling daily. There was a new confidence in the people who were recovering from the stunning blow of Dunkirk. The Lancasters and the Fortresses were blasting at Hamburg and Berlin and while there was plenty of fireworks over East Anglia and small towns, the German planes found it increasingly difficult to penetrate London's defenses. The war in the air was raging now in its greatest intensity over enemy territory. The newly arrived hospital units were dismayed; the English had nothing to sell, lend or give. All food, clothing and equipment for the American services came from the States. Well-liked "Scotty" kept 2nd General's PX fairly well supplied and dispensed what merchandise he had with constant good humor and a determined impartiality. Once he received a supply of the much-coveted Army cigarette lighters and knowing there would be a stampede for them, he devised a plan. An alarm clock was set for a certain time and any G. I. who happened to be purchasing anything in the PX at the time the alarm went off had the privilege of buying a lighter. The Chief Nurse who was

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unique in the outfit because of her non-smoking habits, hit the jackpot one day while paying for her daily "coke." She enjoyed a few minutes of almost unbearable popularity. During this extraordinarily meager period the patients in 2nd General continued to get good food but the personnel was put on field rations. It became impossible to move from one place to another and officers and nurses were glad indeed they had been able to see so much of Britain when on leaves during their first year. The new-comers did not get around on pleasure trips. On October 12, the Chief Nurse wrote home:

So our Bill will be coming over to fly a Thunderbolt; I was selfishly hoping it would be over before he had to come! From his picture he looks such a kid but so do a lot of the flyers we have admitted lately, some of them have never started to shave. Unable to avoid tree-tops when bailing out at night they get broken ribs, ankles or legs. Flak is wicked, jagged-looking stuff too; when an airman is lucky he just brings it back embedded in the body of his plane. The Forts and the Thunderbolts shot down 102 enemy craft in last Sunday night's raid. We lost three friends. Ambassador Winant's son is reported missing—his thirteenth mission. The sound of the bombers going out night after night to make their dents in Germany —will I ever forget it! Nearly all of my nurses have given their first transfusion; they take six of us every week.

The nurses reported that they heard queer noises at night on the golf course adjoining the hospital grounds; they said it sounded like men digging and scrambling into foxholes. Could it be maneuvers? The next morning when Sooner and his mistress were romping on the golf course, which they had come to think of as their own special playground, the dog, now grown to pony size, came bounding back from the edge of the woods with a huge branch of tree which he proudly laid at the feet of his adored one. Receiving absentminded praise he scampered off after another which he secured with ease. Then the whole hedgerow of trees bordering the course took on animation; one tree with branches waving as in a storm advanced on two feet shouting angry protests. Men camouflaged (they thought) were playing forest and Sooner was all for helping; it must be very hard for a dog to understand why he gets locked up just when things

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are so pleasant. The Hospital was immensely setup when an anti-aircraft gun was mounted just back of Block 8 and a troop from the Airborne Division moved next door to the Post. Protection at last! But it turned out to be maneuvers. With so many troops in England, all of them practicing their special skills for confounding the enemy, it was not strange that the units overlapped and trod on each others toes. It was like playing puss-in-the-corner in a too-small backyard.

What England had been fearing and preparing for happened one night! Great blobs of black ink dropped out of the sky onto the countryside about Oxford. It was after mid-night and those few who were abroad were scared out of their wits. Parachutists—hundreds of them! The alarm was given. Home guards and farmers, the latter armed with pitchforks (to each his own Hess!), came running. In no time at all the black-faced invaders were rounded up and clapped into the local jails. English ears should have been attuned to vivid American oaths by this time but in blackout it was better to play it safe and listen later. In a few hours the American parachutists were released, except for those admitted to the hospital for broken legs and ankles. Were they hopping mad at their navigator who had mistaken Boxford for Oxford in his briefing! The terrain was different from what the men had been told to expect—and so was the reception. Some of the paratrooper-neighbors were entertained in the *Vestals' Retreat;* to the nurses they seemed, like the men in the Air Corps, very young but it was plain they wished to be considered very tough. It was wonderful to hear them telling Col. Crawford how to bail out of a plane with or without a jeep. They had embarked for England on a ship that broke down halfway over and had been transferred in mid-Atlantic to a vessel headed back to Canada. As they told it, a jinx was on them for their next ship left the same Canadian port three times—just to empty garbage! In fact the outfit spent so much time on the water they claimed the right to wear both theater ribbons! The men in the hospital played the role of rugged superiority,—"Give that hypo to that sissy over there; I can take it!" Another injured "invader" had to have a hypo to prepare him for the anesthesia he was to get but he acted so chagrined and stubborn about it the nurse said to him—

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"If it will make you feel any better, I'll give it to you with a needle that has a hook on the end."

He grinned; "tough yourself, heh?"

Mary Witt the deservedly popular Red Cross worker assigned to 2nd General was transferred the last of October after having been with the Unit from Ft. Meade days; Jean Napier, who like Mary hailed from Atlanta, Ga., was taking her place. A party was in order. Mary's brother, a Chief Petty Officer on a U. S. battleship, was able by fortunate circumstances to attend; brother and sister had not met once in ten years. The southern accent was so pervasive the scent of honeysuckle in moonlight hovered over the Chief Nurse's apartment where dinner was served; it almost overpowered the fragrance of baked potatoes, hamburgers, fried onions and salad made with mayonnaise sent from home. Mrs. Woods, the English woman employed by the nurses as a maid, had been asked to bring in rolls; she could not find any but innocently produced some nice cracked dog biscuits. Later the party moved over to the *Vestals' Retreat* and in a melee of cheer sang songs the rest of the evening. Goodby Mary! Welcome, Jean!

An arrangement was made with English Military Hospitals for an exchange of nurses, two at a time, for a term of four to six weeks. The plan was expected to have mutual benefits, bring British and American nursing groups to a better understanding of each other; for this DS the nurses of 2nd General were volunteers. Lts. Louisa Kent and Ardra Taylor went to Hampshire in November. Louisa wrote of this experience:

Sisters Quarters
Royal Victoria Hospital
Netley, Hampshire

Dear Matron, Sisters and Brother Sooner;

Already I feel as if I had been here a month—and three weeks more to go! We are a mile from Netley station, through a Park, up a hill and down one of those railroad paths you "cawn't miss." Our arrival just preceeded that of 600 patients, an exchange of prisoners effected with Germany, who came in on a hospital train; they have spent the last three and a half years in Germany and the last several

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weeks en route here. Most of them are entirely incapacitated. The hospital was in a tizzy. Sisters who had worked all day had to go on night duty again at 12; the unloading went on until 4 A. M. Forty minutes after we arrived we were conducted to "fever" by an orderly and there we stayed until 6:30 P. M. of that day, not even in working clothes.

The schedule (pronounced shedule) here is something. A maid bangs through the corridor in blackout, you hear her coming all the way. "Quarter of seven, sisters!" Our emporium bedroom with a ceiling like Grand Central Station, has a nice little gas job in it which yields heat as long as we continue to shovel in the shillings. In the sisters' mess we drink tea in a silent, dignified atmosphere, no one says a word to anyone else. Golly, I wonder what these sisters would think of our lovely informal mess with Brownie and Porkie waiting on us and all those great vats of marmalade and jam. Here, the marmalade gives out by Wednesday and a sticky treacle substitutes for the rest of the week. Meals are strictly carbohydrate including the sausages. The fever department is a ten-minute trudge uphill; treatments start at 7:20 A. M., we are through and cleaned up by 6:20 P. M.—usually. There is a variety of silent, preoccupied M.O.s (Medical Officers) who wander in and out of the hypertherm and make strange remarks. If you send any more American sisters on DS have each take her own little cask of sugar; even if sugar isn't used, there is something about having it gives moral support and social prestige when you can set your little jar of sugar alongside the other sisters' little jars of sugar! And tell them to take powdered coffee because here it is tea, tea, TEA! And tell them to bring a sense of humor, warm clothes and torches for it is as dark as the inside of your hat in all the buildings and the torch is to help you find things in your bureau drawers. The first day here I fell upstairs and coming off duty later I fell on my face in the dim corridor where two sofas are so placed no one could do anything else. You can reach us at the above address if that train comes into 2nd General and you need us in a hurry. Otherwise, I do hope we will get back for a happy old Thanksgiving at our own mess.

Cheerio,

Louisa.

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The arrival of fatigues, two suits for each nurse, caused much hilarity; cut for tall girls with long legs, the short ones doubled in spasm after spasm of laughter, just looking at each other. They were worn for the Sadie Hawkins Dance, November 6, a madcap carnival, with the Air Corps as guests. The airmen played up; they tied pink and blue ribbons in their hair and went all "Daisie Mae"— "Chase-me-if-you-want-me." The nurses were voracious wolverines. It was a roll-out-the-barrel jamboree which gained momentum as the barrels rolled out. In spite of the noisy horseplay the motors of the planes overhead could be heard throbbing. Part of the clowning was born of resentment against the latest orders; no more evening dresses to be worn on any occasion. It was a blow. Christmas packages were coming in containing filmy frocks from New York stores or fresh from mothers' fingers, something to help daughters feel gala on their second Yuletide away from home. Though the C. O. was secretly sympathetic, there was nothing to be done about the restriction.

The Stars and Stripes flew outside a school in the 1300-year-old village of Wytham on Thanksgiving Day, November 25, 1943. British and American service women toasted the King, President Roosevelt, and Anglo-American friendship at tea in the "White Hart." Miss Moore-Smith, headmistress of the school, had the scholars assembled in the schoolhouse to greet their American guests, Capt. David V. Habif and Capt. Marjorie Peto, who spoke to them about the origin and observance of the holiday in America. The children, permitted to ask questions, seemed most concerned to know if American children dressed the way they did. Capt. Peto looked at the boys in their tight, short breeches ending above knobby knees blue with cold and legs bare except for socks (yet, English children do not feel cold, they are always removing their coats in trains and pushing for seats at the open windows), and she wondered what to say. Youngsters in New York would scorn those tight pants as "sissy" and certainly English children would feel the same contempt for coddling snowsuits. Tactfully the difference in climate was explained, how bitter the cold and deep the snow in many parts of the United States; therefore children played and went to school pretty well bundled up. Ski and snow clothes were described. To the speaker's relief the listening children seemed gravely satisfied with the answer. A three-

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year-old scholar said, "Thank you for coming," and presented Capt. Peto with a book of poems inscribed: "Wytham School. To thank you for your visit and to remind you of Thanksgiving Day in Oxford." Rector Yeandle-Hignell said he hoped that by this time next year Wytham's American guests would be at home to tell their folks about Thanksgiving Day in Berkshire. The Americans applauded the sentiment hopefully. As a matter of record, the "American guests" the next year, 1944, were piled into Army trucks moving out of Normandy toward the battlefront at the Rhine!

At 2nd General that Thanksgiving Day the patients had turkey dinners and entertainment put on by the USO. First comers in the nurses' mess got turkey but later the holiday meal was eked out with pork. Night nurses ate spaghetti and Spam and took a dim view of it. Clothes may not make the party but it adds 90% of the zest; the dance on the Saturday following the holiday was easily one of the Hospital's social failures with everyone in correct and utterly tiresome OD.

Through November and December of 1943 the weather was deadly. Heavy fog turned into frozen mist which, inhaled, coated the lungs with flakes of frost, or so it felt. Atmosphere became a tangible thing—it could be swallowed. Sooner came back from his romps with rime edging his ears like tatting; Englishman that he was, he loved it. The flu bug got busy among the newly arrived troops first and spread to 2nd General. No respecter of rank it laid low in succession Col. Crawford, Col. Schullinger, the Chief Nurse and medical officers who could ill be spared; the nurses' wards were crowded and the admission of two nurses a day for nearly three weeks rendered the hospital acutely short of help. To give spirits a lift Christmas packages were opened, especially those labeled perishable foods. None of the English stores had holiday decorations; cards with sentimental verses seemed the best they could do; no bells, tinsel or streamers. Again this year there was an abundance of holly which was garlanded about posts in an attempt at decoration and a few evergreen trees appeared for the wards. The officer-patients worked with scissors, paste and bits of bright paper salvaged from the bundles sent from home; chains, cornucopias (empty!), and angels took crude form. It was a little on the pathetic side. Patients in the Eye Ward

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made a truly ingenious doll house out of a carton; the nurses made rugs and curtains for it and the toy was given to a lucky little orphan —lucky only because there were no toys at all for any child. A month's candy rations with sweets and biscuits from the home packages were made into one thousand gift bags which were presented by Santa Claus to local children. Two days after Christmas homes were found where Santa had forgotten the children entirely and the chaplain started collecting again. He did very well, too. While sojourning on Ward 14, the Chief Nurse wrote between her sneezing fits:

One clear night and we had an air raid! The night supervisor made us put on our tin helmets—looked so silly in bed. I have lived through an inspection from the patient's point of view. Awakened at dawn, scrubbed, scoured and told not to dare to move; I even replied dutifully to the question put by the inspecting officer — "Are they taking good care of you?"—"Yes, sir!" Of course they are but I wondered if they weren't, would anyone dare say so? The doctor caring for me magnanimously ordered a good slug of whiskey for me last night to help me sleep after the raid. When it came it tasted so much like kerosene I could not drink all of it. Told the doctor this A. M.

"Nonsense! That's our best *spirits frumenti*—drink it up!"

Half an hour later the doctor dashed into the ward, strode over to my bed waving his arms frantically.

"Don't drink that whiskey," he gasped, "It *is* kerosene!"

Somebody had stolen all the whiskey from the warehouse and to delay discovery had filled the containers with kerosene. Though I live, the Red Cross sent me the most beautiful bouquet of orchids and I have other luxurious gifts—two eggs with shells on, two lemons and a stack of who-dun-its. It would be nice to stay here but I fear Sooner is lonely without me; Mrs. Woods said he ate up two books but that was because he was hungry. She loves Sooner and finds excuses for him. The nurses tell me they have a juke box now in the *Vestals' Retreat*—I hope it cheers them up. They are concocting all kinds of plans for making use of their evening dresses; the latest is to convert them into nightgowns, bed being the only place we can go "out of uniform". Today I have been asked to submit names of nurses willing to go to the U. S. A. on DS and then come back. Wonder how that

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will take? I'd hate to do it; if I ever got home, it would be awful to leave again.

The second Christmas in the ETO was practically a duplication of the first. Parties for all the bed patients with games and Coco-Cola afterward. At 7 P. M. on Christmas Eve there was a Protestant candle-light service in the Chapel so beautifully decorated. At 8 P. M. two divisions of doctors, nurses and some of the enlisted personnel sang carols through the wards. At 9:30 P. M. came an entertainment in Hut 34 with the nurses starting the show. The Chief Nurse, as five-star General Hennessey, introduced the all-star cast of brain-trusters, each a one-star general; these experts told HOW TO PREPARE FOR AN INSPECTION or, A WORD TO THE FOOLISH IS WISE. General Mess (Lt. Willetta Mosser), General Inspection (Lt. Laura Smith), General Appearance (Lt. Margaret Peters), General Grounds (Lt. Virginia Randall, General Nuisance (Lt. Rose Barrett);—all gave the most helpful and most popular instructions for those who were ambitious to get ahead in the Army. Many felt there was good, solid sense in them and if followed faithfully would bring felicitious results—possibly release from further participation in an unpleasant war. A sample:

Gen. Nuisance: What not to do in six short don'ts.

1. Don't salute.
2. Don't look left, look right.
3. Don't use the phone. Sgt. Lawhorn did and swooned when he heard the General was on his way to the Sgt's ward. His clean and beautiful ward was to be inspected by a Yankee General.
4. Don't waste time shining shoes. Give the General a shiner —he deserves a Purple Heart too.
5. Don't do anything. Your ward won't be the one that is inspected anyway.
6. Don't report by giving rank, name, age, and place of birth —a simple "Hello" suffices. If you are a girl, you might throw in your telephone number.

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The doctors took the next act with a fake broadcast and the enlisted men did song and dance routines. After which, doughnuts and Coco-Cola. Then there was mid-night Mass. Under a tiny Christmas tree in the Chief Nurse's apartment there was opening of packages with a great scattering of papers which Sooner thought was great fun. He was delighted with his hair brush. Col. Crawford helped to carry the nurses' gifts to the nurses' mess where a big box covered with fancy paper stood in the center of the table; on top was the Christmas greeting sent by General Hawley surrounded with the cards sent with the presents—"To the Unit from the PH nurses." The gifts, wrapped individually, were for everyone who ate in the Mess including telephone operators and Red Cross workers; they looked festive and gay when the girls found them in the morning at breakfast. An antique wine jug, a Dresden candlestick and a handsome pair of Chelsea figurines were presents to the Chief Nurse from the nurses. They reached America safely too—in time.

Christmas Day there was the usual work to do but at 5:30 P. M. cocktails were served in the *Vestals' Retreat* — nice ones made by Major Masserlink and Capt. Fred Heath. The dining room that night was the prettiest it had ever been; 2nd General's interior decorator number one, Lt. Mary Swallen, had made bells from the silver paper that covers x-ray film; these shielded the lights. Lt. Ruth Willey made winsome angels out of paper pieced together and painted; above these, festoons of holly were arranged as a frieze along the walls. A Christmas tree and the new juke box shared a corner of the room. The menu: Tomato juice cocktail, turkey, mashed potatoes, peas, gravy; ice cream for dessert. An order forbidding the ice cream had arrived the day before but the mix already was made, so—there was an order against waste also! The dinner was good and everyone had a good time; some even complained about eating too much. On the Eye Ward, where Capt. Calhoun and Lt. Gertrude Martin held forth, the patients had dinner on the ward, instead of being sent to the Mess Hall; a large table was set and decorated from which the nurses served the patients. This isn't done in the Army ordinarily. The patients were so excited and happy they ended with after dinner speeches during which one of the nurses (Lt. Ardra Taylor) washed all the dishes. Probably there never were two more surprised KPs in any war! After dinner those who were not too tired danced to the

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tunes in the juke box but those recently recovered from their bout with the flu tottered off to bed. If it had not been for the headlines in the newspapers—INVASION TO START IN 90 DAYS—it might have been called a completely happy holiday; but immediately it was apparent that plans were afoot to keep everyone on the alert. New Years would not be so gay. The following is the text of messages received Christmas, 1943.

"To the Men and Women of the Armed Forces: Happily, the Star of Christmas again shines brightly in a world black with War and Hate. Never has mankind yearned more for what that Star signifies —Peace and Honor to men of good will. The way we must travel is yet long. As you go hopefully forward into the New Year you can be sustained by the thought that you have the most precious gift which is in the power of your countrymen to bestow, affection and deep gratitude. To this I can only add my very warmest personal greetings to every one of you."

Franklin D. Roosevelt.

From the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces:

"I extend heartiest Christmas and New Year greetings to all members of the European Theater of Operations. My admiration for your accomplishments during the past six months is equalled only by my complete confidence that you will meet every test of the future with the same fortitude and determination. My profound thanks and best wishes go to all ranks in the Ground Forces, the Navy, the Air Forces, the Nurse Corps, and to all civilian services associated with the European Theater of Operations."

Eisenhower.

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England — Cirencester

"No leaves will be granted for the purpose of returning to the States." Orders. That settled the to-do stirred by the notice that nurses with good reasons were to be allowed to go back to the U. S. on Detached Service; the final decree permitting a nurse to go home applied only to those with two years or more service in Iceland, India or Africa. One nurse from 2nd General benefited; Lt. Helen Page Brown accompanied a patient, a general, back home; she had two weeks leave and then had to rejoin the Unit. In January of 1944, Col. Rousselot left 2nd General to become Commanding Officer of the 108th General; Col. Kneeland left on a special assignment which at the time was a military secret; Lt. Col. Turner was transferred to a Station Hospital to become Chief of Medical Service. Ten nurses, volunteers, signed up for Evacuation Hospital duty. Gas masks were exchanged for a new type—no improvement in looks. Hospital personnel was warned not to have too much luggage on hand; definitely something was up so there was a scrounging for boxes and wrappings in which to send home blue uniforms (against the rules to give them away) and the many personal possessions that accrue from living two years in one place.

Spring advanced and again the nurses pedalled along the towpath bordering the canal which made such a pleasant ride from the hospital to a popular pub, *The Trout. The Grave Digger Arms* held enticement also but only because of its intriguing name for it lay on the road to London, too far to be reached by bicycle. *The Trout* was reached by an arched bridge over a small stream and the stone inn stood on a terraced garden now in picturesque dilapidation. Two fearsome stone lions stood guard on the lawn and live peacocks and peahens accepted crumbs from the patrons with a nice mixture of greed and dignity. It was at *The Trout* that several nurses met the young English Navy serviceman and his family sipping their beer at a table under the trees. When he identified the nurses as belonging to a hospital unit from New York he insisted on having them join him; he presented his father, mother and sisters. This glad-handing at first sight was most unusual behavior for the reticent English. Then the story came out. The seaman had been on a ship that car-

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ried the Canadians over the Channel on that expensive Commando raid on Dieppe and on the return trip his ship had been shot from under him. Badly burned and shocked he somehow had reached home and was recuperating now. During the first months of his service he had spent weeks at a time in New York and Brooklyn while his ship was in harbor; never had he been allowed to spend a nickel of his own money in a restaurant or place of amusement and rarely paid his own carfares. New York and Brooklyn had been so good to him he wanted now to return the hospitality even in a small way. So the girls drank the health of the King and Queen and the serviceman's family in glasses of the customary warm, flat beer, while sitting peacefully in the make-believe warmth of the grudging sun.

To the Americans in Oxford came a strange feeling. Parting from England was going to bring pangs; roots had been started and friends had been made. But the countryside had a reminding story to tell. Every acre was jam-packed with war equipment, vehicles of every description; tanks, guns, cranes, trucks, ambulances. Mile after mile of roadside was piled with mounds of ammunition. Over the fields of cabbages and lettuce plants set out so patiently by the farmers and the Land Army girls, tents had been pitched and were seething with thousands of American servicemen. There was no room for the little white lambs with the black ears and feet that made so charming a part of the English landscape. Thundrous activity in the air had become so constant it was barely noticed but the increased tension and piled-up scenery backstage indicated the curtain must soon rise on another act of the war drama. Spring comes early to the British Isles; Sooner stretched out in the niggardly sunshine and the C. O. said: my! he was a dog with a long wheelbase. Air Corps patients from the frostbite wards were playing football; how, was their secret for each had lost fingers, toes or a hand. For them the war was over.

Leaves spent in London would be missed for in spite of war scars and shortages the big city had fascination; there were the theaters and the play-actors who had carried on so gallantly, almost contemptuously, while things came apart all about them. Audiences of stoic people leaving buildings picked up flak from the sidewalk—souvenirs. In the London Zoo four lion cubs were born during the Blitz; they throve mightily and learned how to queue up for their

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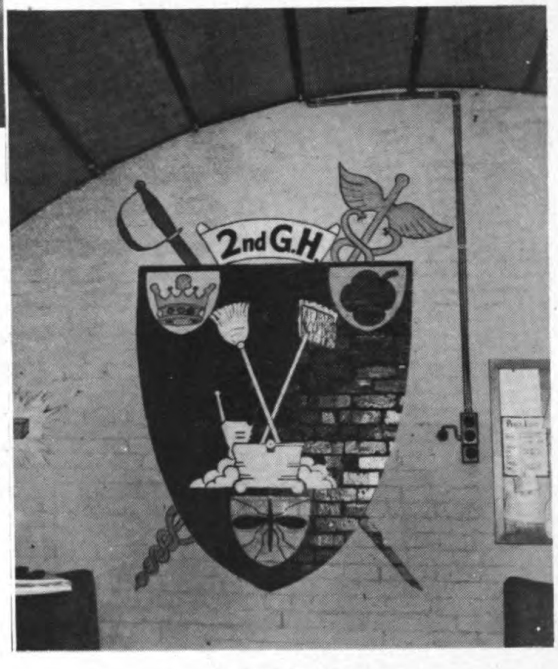
General Eisenhower Obliges with a Smile at 2nd General.

Betsy Poses with the Four Stars.



Coat of Arms
on the Wall of the Officers' Club.

The Caduceus
The Sword
The Crown for England
The Shamrock for N. Ireland
The Broom and Mop
The Pail of Soapsuds
The Mosquito (for Belgian Congo Group)
The Mortar and Pestle

Leaving Churchill.

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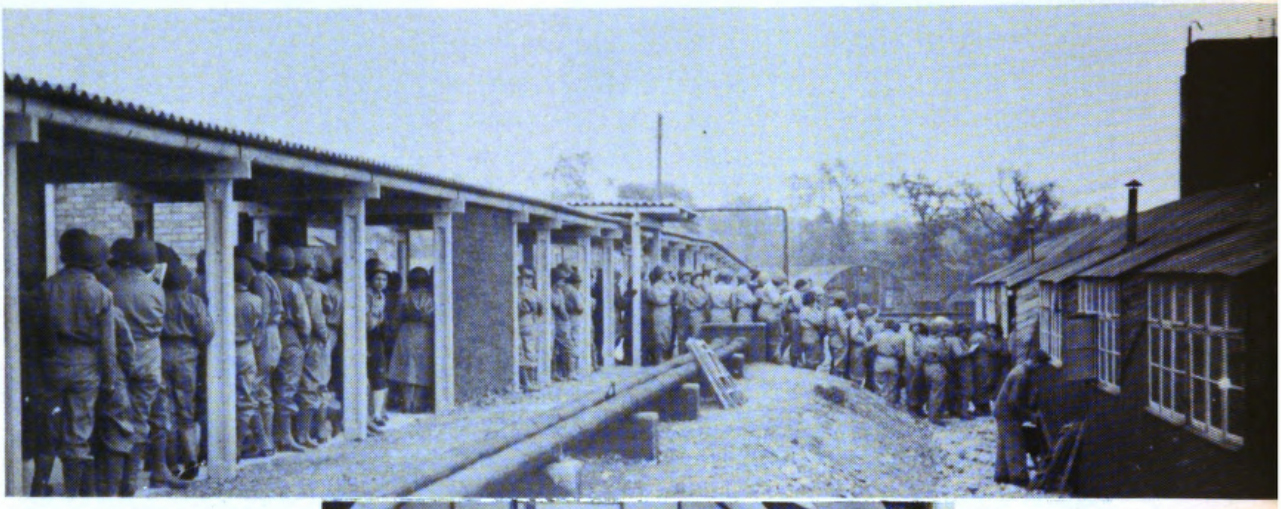
Nurses' Quarters Nissen Hut 25 Cirencester.

Reveille 6 A. M. O. D.



Queue for Mess Hall.

Interior Nurses' Quarters Polished for Inspection.

Exercises.

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dinner just like everybody else. A woman keeper petted the big cats and scratched their ears; she even played peek-a-boo with the Bengal tiger who for the time being seemed full of cooperation. Children clapped their hands at the chimpanzees and the chimps clapped back; on certain days they were allowed to have tea together. Camels and ponies took the tots for rides. Each animal had been adopted by a private citizen for the duration and because of this arrangement the Zoo continued to bring joy to a generation of youngsters who got along without so many things—toys, fruit, sweets, fathers and sometimes homes. It was falsely reported that the Red Cross Club for Nurses was hit during a raid; nurses from 2nd General were having tea in the Club at the time—a building two doors away was hit. That was close enough. Mrs. Biddle came in and sat at the table with the nurses; deliberately ignoring the racket of the raid, the chatter went on and Mrs. Biddle's Labrador retriever contributed his bit toward normalcy by begging everyone's doughnut and feeling no shame.

April 12, 1944

Dear Mother and Father;

Sooner and I were romping on the golf course in the sunset when Bunny Knowles, my assistant, came down the road with a young airman who was grinning broadly. It was Bill Peto! Having watched for him such a long time, I'd given up hope. There was a double barbed-wire fence between us so all we could do was shake hands. Bunny was disappointed, she said I ought at least to have leaped the fence. Bill has been on two missions since coming over and because mechanics are mending holes in his Thunderbolt, he has two days leave and decided to hunt me up. You know how finicky our Bill is about his clothes; Sooner leaped and got the beautiful tunic all dirty! But Bill has come a long way; he shrugged and said, "It might as well be now as later." We walked back. In the *Vestals' Retreat* I said—"Mrs. Stockdale, this is my nephew at last".

She didn't believe me.

"You girls and your nephews and brothers!"

The visit called for celebration and food, much food, for our

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flyer has not lost his appetite; in fact he looks well, though a little homesick, but he is calm and collected compared to the fighter pilots we entertain here. Bill lives in a tent, stumbles over things in the blackout, splashes in the mud and wonders why he brought his "pinks". Some of our bomber pilot friends dropped in, there was beer and conversation. Next morning we watched Sooner chase birds over the fields as if it might be his last chance to have so much fun, as indeed it may be. Any day now he will be going to Guard Dog School. I think the poor dog senses something wrong for he stays closer to me than ever. After lunch Bill and I went to Oxford and we secured permission to take some pictures of the colleges. I showed him New College Chapel where I'd heard the Boys' Choir sing Christmas before last; he seemed shocked, said it did not seem to him I had been over here so long. It does to me! I wish I could have gone into London with him but we cannot stay overnight anywhere any more. Bill kissed me goodby, climbed into the compartment of the London train; the train said "Toot" and off he went leaving me more homesick than I've ever been before. He even remembered that tomorrow is my birthday.

Don't worry too much—I love you all dearly;

Marjorie.

Col. Crawford returned from Washington where he had flown two weeks before to transact Unit business. He brought a birthday cake from New York to the Chief Nurse, a cake made with white flour and iced with rich, sweet chocolate! The nurses got up a party. An advance group from 91st. General Hospital, which was taking over Churchill from 2nd General, moved in at this period and all the officers were kept busy showing the new people around. The Chief Nurse hoped the next "Matron" would be kind to her lovely flower garden on which so much care had been spent but was saddened when so little interest was shown. Generals Lee, Thrasher and Hawley one day brought a distinguished visitor—Mr. Stettinius, at that time Under Secretary of State. On April 16, there was tremendous excitement when General Eisenhower made a visit, not on an inspection, but to call on a patient. While the General was inside there was

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a dash for cameras, a posing over and near the four magic stars on his car while friends stood guard and the General's chauffeur was human enough to make out he was blind. When the watchers semaphored a warning there was a scurry to the sidelines and an assumption of innocent expressions. When General "Ike" emerged he smiled knowingly and indicated his willingness to be snapped. Hence the nice picture.

Under the Ministry of Aircraft Production, Sooner entered His Majesty's Service. Puppy days were over. He was patted on the head, brushed with his Christmas brush and with his mistress rode in an ambulance to the School. The R.A.F. officer in charge greeted them with good psychology.

"Capt. Marjorie Peto, APO 647—dog Sooner?"

On receiving the affirmation, he said; "Hello, Sooner!"

Sooner was a little scared and his brown eyes were questioning. The kennels were warm and clean and all the dogs looked well-conditioned. Dogs stay at the first school long enough to unlearn the bad habits acquired as pets and long enough to demonstrate their ability to become good Guard Dogs; if they pass their tests they are sent to a regular Training School. All the way back to Oxford copious tears were shed and once in her own room, the Chief Nurse threw herself on the bed in an abandonment of loneliness. Only those who have been close friends with a dog will understand. There came a pounding on the door.

"Hey! Come on out! Here are orders. You are a Major! Come make whoopee!"

The final farewell dance at the Hospital took place on April 22; Air Force guests promised to find the nurses no matter where their orders took them. It seemed a hearty bluff calculated only to keep chins up but the promise was kept—in quite a spectacular way. Two days later the first contingent of nurses, about one third of the group, left Churchill for the small town of Swindon. Many nurses from other units already were billeted in private homes of the town and again the police knocked on doors to tell citizens they must prepare to house one or two more nurses in each household. It was a situa-

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tion relished no more by the Americans than by the long-suffering English. Lt. Lydia Jordan was billeted with a family in a small house and after her dirty, tiring ride she felt the bath possibilities might as well be made clear. She was told there would be hot water Saturday and as the day of her arrival was Monday she said, "Fine!" Water had been rationed in England for some time, especially bath water. Hotels and clubs managed this by having lines painted on their tubs above which water for a bath was not to be drawn. The bather was somewhat on his honor but as the temperature of the water could be controlled, the guests seldom cheated unless he or she had polar bear proclivities. Two nurses were billeted in a household where there was an infant; feeling sorry for the young mother who declared she had not been in London for over a year, the nurses offered one day to care for the baby while the lady had a shopping fling in the big city. It was fun; they put the babe in his pram and wheeled him up and down the streets. It so happened that a General from Southern Base passed through Swindon that day—one of those eagle-eyed officers who missed nothing. What he saw apparently failed to please him; it could not have been coincidence that before twenty-four hours had elapsed, orders arrived and not an American nurse was left in Swindon!

At Churchill 900 patients were cared for until 7:30 P. M. the night before the Unit moved out. Such a clearing out, storing, giving away and packing of personal possessions! Lucky 91st. General! Though it is doubtful if they realized it. Furniture and equipment paid for with private funds were necessarily left behind; the incoming group would have it much easier than 2nd General had it when Churchill Hospital was taken over two years before. Substantial presents were given to the tearful maids, the Land Army girl was touchingly grateful for packages of seeds and reluctant goodbys were said to Mrs. Stockdale. The *Vestals' Retreat* had more than justified its existence, financially and socially. Officers and men were sent to a tent camp; nurses with bedding rolls, trunks, suitcases and more supplies from the PX than they could carry, squeezed into ambulances and were taken to Cirencester. Upon arrival the ambulance doors burst open, spilling nurses out on their noses; the gravest fatality was the shattering of a bottle salvaged from the club; its contents per-

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fumed the area and attracted interested welcomers.

Cirencester was a Hospital Center. One of the installations, situated on part of the estate of the Earl of Bathurst, consisted of 40 Nissen huts which comprised the 25th General Hospital; it was fully equipped, staffed and ready to operate at a moment's notice, namely: D-day. In the meantime 1000 nurses were billeted there and at least that many again were billeted throughout the Center; all were being put through a rigorous training program while awaiting further orders. 2nd General nurses (including the group sent so hurriedly from Swindon) with dietitians and Red Cross workers occupied four of the huts. There was surprise when it was discovered that the nurses from 5th General Hospital Unit (Boston) were among those present. The 5th General Hospital had landed in North Ireland a few months before 2nd General had arrived in England though the date of activation of both Units was the same. There existed a friendly-enemy attitude between the two groups. A dim view was taken of 2nd General's appearance in Cirencester for the rivals, jealous of priority, wanted desperately to be first across the Channel to set up a hospital in France.

Mary Witt (now in London) wrote to one of the nurse's parents:

American Red Cross Hdq.

Dear Folks:

It nearly breaks my heart not to be with the girls now; I went to see them. They live like field soldiers in fatigues, field boots, helmets, wool gloves; under this they wear "long johns", three wool shirts and two sweaters! They stand reveille at dawn, run like mad to have breakfast, clean barracks and make beds (no sheets or pillowcases now) in forty-five minutes so they will be ready for inspection. Then off to classes of all kinds including detailed lectures on pit latrines. Then they take off for ten or twelve mile hikes with full packs; if it doesn't kill them they will be hefty gals when the war is over. After they return from field trips they have fifteen minutes in which to change into Class A uniforms to stand Retreat at 5 o'clock. The remainder of the day is all theirs but they may not go off the Post. It was a sad day when they had to give Sooner away, he was a

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beautiful dog and we all loved him; he is training with the R.A.F. and he wears a tag:

"My Name is Sooner.
On His Majesty's Service."

Bless his heart—he will make a good soldier. We all are excited just now but keep too busy to worry about what we are actually facing; needless to say we will be glad when it is over and we can return home.

Cordially;

Mary Witt.

Each nurse cleaned her own mess gear after chow by dipping it in a tank of boiling water, with no one wanting to be the thousandth one to dip. The Post was drinking chlorinated river water. The food in Cirencester was poor at all times and reached a climax when 71 nurses in one day collapsed with food poisoning. The attacks were so sudden and violent the victims were carried on stretchers into the hospital; three nurses returning from DS thought the Invasion was on! Lt. Helen Page Brown returned from the States in time to be stricken. All recovered from the attacks but it was grim while the emergency lasted.

Orders came limiting each nurse to 100 pounds baggage; trunks were repacked and stamped in white paint: INDEFINITE STORAGE. They were to be left in England and no one expected ever to see them again. A score or more of the Unit doctors found out where the nurses were and came to visit them. Such a gabbing! A listener would have thought the two groups had not seen each other for months. The doctors sat on the trunks and sipped slightly medicated river water while asking and answering questions.

"Do you have a latrine detail too?" one of the nurses wanted to know.

The questioned officer replied; "We don't even have a latrine."

"We drill till we drop; what do you do all day?" came the next challenging query.

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There were grunts of disgust. "Someone must have got the orders mixed; so help me, they are teaching us to be nurses."

When the visitors got up to say goodby the seat of each pair of trousers bore a neat white sign: INDEFINITE STORAGE.

One night at Formal Retreat and Review Parade a Company Commander was lacking and Major Peto, the only Chief Nurse at the Center who still was with her original Unit and therefore was the ranking Chief Nurse, was ordered to advance with the platoon leaders to salute the Commanding Officer. Flanked by officers of six feet plus, it was an ordeal for the short major but she managed to keep in step and saluted smartly. Her nurses said they were bursting, first with fear, and then with pride. A Competitive Drill was held with each Chief Nurse leading her own Unit; it was won by 2nd General nurses to their intense satisfaction but the award did nothing to mitigate the vexation which seethed in the bosoms of the 5th General nurses! A fine show was put on by the 2000 nurses billeted in the Cirencester Center at a Formal Review by General Hawley. The band for the occasion turned out to be the one that had come over on the Duchess of Bedford with the 2nd General nurses; when the shipmates were recognized the musicians gave out with such animated tempo the girls "picked 'em up and laid 'em down" with West Point precision. It is regrettable no pictures were taken of this spectacular event for not one mistake was made and the reviewing officers were exceptionally congratulatory.

Lt. Embury, one of the officers detailed to the Center's training program, gave lectures on the Purification of Drinking Water. One fine day he led his class of nurses to an open field starred with bluebells and poppies where he set up the tripod from which was suspended a Lister bag. This was a contrivance which was to be of great importance to everyone in a short time. The lecturer carefully arranged other gear and his notes. It was one of those sunny, warm, sparkling days which come to England so seldom that when they do arrive they affect the head like a flock of champagne cocktails. It was the kind of weather the Generals were counting on for the Invasion and which, tragically, they did not get. The nurses squatted on the ground; the ever-present planes droned overhead. Lt. Embury reacted to the languorous zephyrs.

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"Now, suppose we are a company of travellers lost, let us say, among the bluebells—"

Zoom! One of the planes from the blue above swooped, and "buzzed" the startled class, each member of which had flattened automatically; then the plane climbed out of sight again before anyone could collect a wit. The lieutenant, momentarily dazed, retrieved his papers and made another start.

"As I was saying," he reiterated; "we are lost and we are thirsty and find ourselves wandering in a field of bluebells—"

Zoom! This time the pilot with hair-raising effect missed the tripod by a few inches before he disappeared with a mighty roar over a hedgerow of trees. By now the girls were giggling; they had a hunch the Air Force had found them and this was one of the boy friends from Oxford doing his stuff. From a pilot's point of view—no harm in that; if he can fly over Germany and knock out her biggest cities, why can he not hop a few fences and rattle the dishes on the shelves of the folks at home? Or buzz some dames in a field? Where's everybody's humor? Lt. Embury's humor was an unknown quantity but he was a conscientious officer and also a stubborn one; he meant to give this lecture and he had no intention of relinquishing his beautiful opening line. Nor could the zany pilot have known how perfectly his timing synchronized with the prologue on the Purification of Water.

"As I was saying—" The lecturer's voice sounded a little desperate as it struggled to regain the attention of the class whose eyes frankly were turned skyward. "We are here among the bluebells—"

Zoom! For the third time the dive was repeated before the plane streaked off into the "wild blue yonder", its pilot to become adult again and resume responsible duty. The nurses were hugging their knees and rocking with laughter. Lt. Embury found the competition too keen; he gave the girls a baleful look and said with understandable crossness:

"Well *drink* contaminated water then!"

That particular class was over for that day.

On the evening of June 1, Lt. Bill Peto dropped in primed with

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an appropriate gift; he wanted help in celebrating his first German plane (a Folke-Wulf) downed on his 19th mission. Nurses gathered around to hear how fighter planes escorted the big bombers back and forth across the Channel and they tried to imagine how it felt to fly 500 miles an hour. Bill told how the pilot of a Fort only the day before had made contact with him flying high above by singing a little ditty to him—"Cuddle Up a Little Closer, Baby Mine."

"Guess he was nervous," commented Bill. The chatter went on until 3 A. M. Next day, after a ride in an ambulance to a Rehabilitation Hospital (there was nothing else to offer in the way of entertainment) the Major and her nephew arranged to meet in London the following week for a real good time—unless the Invasion was on.

The next week the Invasion was on—and they did not meet. Like any nerve-wracking, long-expected event, when it actually happens no one seems ready to believe it. On the morning of June 6, when a calm British voice announced over the radio that the Invasion had begun, that already troops were landing in France, American listeners were skeptical. All night planes had been going over in one continuous, deafening roar; no one slept, it was felt something was up, but it seemed as if now there ought to be more excitement—an American broadcaster would be stuttering with hysteria. Through the day the English newspapers broke down and ran one-inch headlines and BBC gave the news four times. On the night of June 6, despite cataclysmic history-in-the-making, the nurses were ordered on a night hike, probably with the idea of getting them used to falling over things in the dark, something they had been doing successfully for two years and in which they needed no further practise. There was a howl of protest and the nurses pleaded with such fervor to be allowed instead to listen to the King, who was to speak that evening to the Allied Nations, the officer in charge finally relented.

On D-day-plus-one casualties began arriving in the Hospital Center but to the chagrin of the nurses in 2nd General only drills, not nursing, continued for them; also, hikes with musette bags containing one week's supply of clothing and food, two blankets, one pup tent with poles and pins, gas mask, canteen and first-aid kit. Combat suits arrived. They were men's one-piece garments, overall affairs

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with zippers in all the wrong places. One nurse wrote home: "Oh, for a drop-seat and three little buttons in the back!" Issued without regard for individual height or weight, everyone beholding women thus clad stared in astonishment or laughed outright. Even less like anything the human body ever had been required to don were the pants and jackets which had been subjected to gas-proofing; the process had not only shrunk the fabric but had rendered it inflexible as a board, sticky as fly-paper and had impregnated it with so foul an odor it would have knocked over a German—maybe that was the idea. These garments may have been improved or discontinued later but at the time they were issued to 2nd General, how to get in them was a peculiar problem; even the slimmest nurse reported inability to wriggle into the widest pair of pants. Army orders: Carry them and like it. The nurses compressed them into as small a bundle as possible and wrapped them in newspapers to keep the smell from permeating their other possessions; there was fluent rhetoric when they found out the men had thrown theirs into the Channel.

The weather went back to normal, cold and rainy. Summer? England had had it. The food became worse than ever, boiled pork, blackened, underdone potatoes; all thought they couldn't go another mouthful of cabbage but they did—cold and mixed with grease. With an invasion on, no one dared complain. Orders came reducing the size of the nursing staff of each General Hospital Unit to 83. Seventeen nurses from 2nd General were to form the nucleus of the 104th General Hospital with Capt. Mary Swallen as Chief Nurse. This was not effected painlessly. A wartime soldier should never become attached to a home, a town, a friend or a dog—partings are the order of the day. As other hospital units pulled out, 5th General among them, the spirits of 2nd General hit zero. Frantic appeals were made to Col. Crawford to get them out of there; the nurses wanted to nurse! Col. Crawford made them a visit and declared their morale to be so low each nurse could wear a top hat and still walk under a dachshund. They failed to be amused at his joke. Cheer came when Col. Henry, an 8th Air Force officer friend, called up to tell the girls that Tokio had been bombed! They sat around the wireless, ears bent to hear about it, but when the British news broadcast was almost over, the serene voice of the announcer said—"From

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U. S. sources it has been said parts of Japan were bombed today." That was all. At least the broadcaster did not say "planes from British bases," the usual way of announcing a U. S. air operation. The second bit of good tidings was news that Sooner had graduated and was now a full-fledged Guard Dog; his former owner was to hear once a month how he was getting along.

At this stage in a rocking world, visits by the nurses to a country carnival sounds like a fantastic absurdity. But it happened and it seemed as profitable an evening as one spent in shining shoes or polishing buttons. After a day of drilling, Major Peto with Lts. Patsy Shea and Laura Smith (all in need of exercise) walked two miles down the road to the Fair Grounds where some gypsies held forth in Coney Island-like revelry. Prizes were to be won by playing darts and throwing "ringers". The loot, as tawdry as can be imagined, included a dozen glasses, two figures of ladies with broken arms playing broken mandolins, a peeling valise, a tin pan that leaked, a bottle of soda mints, a bottle of brilliantine, two cups and one saucer, and a tin of "Triple Strength Dentifrice" the main ingredient of which was suspected to be cyanide. The Major revealed herself as a sharpshooter. At one booth Lt. Smith's heart was won by a pastel blue, enameled, fire-proof *pot de chambre*; in order to win this *piece de resistance* of the Fair an aspirant had to shoot the bull's-eye six times in a row. The Major did it and presented the trophy as a birthday present to the yearning lieutenant with the "order" that she carry it back to camp. There were chirps and jeers from the pedestrian traffic on the way back and the guard at the gate checking them in took another look and sniggered—"My God! A booby trap!"

Lt. Bill Peto's second visit to Cirencester on D-day-plus-six brought relief and joy. He was in excellent spirits though he looked tired, which was not strange considering he had flown ten hours on D-day and had made 18 sorties in four succeeding days. After sleeping a whole day he had flown to Cirencester from Ashford, Kent (his base), to see what 2nd General was up to. He was modestly proud of a good job done and was alternately amused and amazed at the nurses' mode of life, bursting into hearty guffaws at sight of their new uniforms. He told about his own decorations.

"I finally got all my ribbons sewed on my blouse but before there

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was a chance to wear it, they had to be removed for more clusters; so I guess I'll leave them all off until I go home and then I'll probably be a first class Air Raid Warden."

A few of the nurses walked over to the airport with him, climbed into and all over his plane. When he took off he shouted, "Don't go away!" and as they stood on the field he tried to buzz their hats off. They stood until the little speck vanished in the sky. There was a tightening of heartstrings at every parting in those days for no one could be sure—.

The next day 2nd General nurses with their duffle were packed into buses and they pulled out of Cirencester. Along the streets and roadway people cheered and waved to them. They were off to war at last!

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England — Tidworth

Not exactly to war—even yet—just to a tent camp on a chalk plain near Tidworth. The Unit was together again; doctors, nurses and enlisted personnel, the latter having lessons in tent pitching and camp sanitation. The nurses lived four to a tent, the ground was the floor; the furniture consisted of a few treasured boxes but there were narrow canvas cots complete with straw mattresses and earwigs. The earwigs were so difficult to dislodge that many nurses preferred to roll up tightly in their own allotment of four blankets and let the insects have the mattresses. The trouble with an earwig (besides looking like a cockroach with horns) is: give him an inch and he takes an ell. In no time flat he inhabited the bedding rolls and was fattening on Class A uniforms and silk stockings that were being saved, so the nurses thought, for the Victory Parade in Paris or perhaps on Fifth Avenue! The wind blew all the time filling the tents with either rain or chalk dust. Sometimes the washroom had a roof (it frequently blew away) and canvas sides which came up to eye-level; there were tin basins in which to wash and showers of a sort —of two sorts—scalding hot and icy cold but the bather had no choice of selection or forehand knowledge. The latrine for nurses was an open air cubicle containing a coal scuttle over which teetered a wooden seat, a vessel known euphoniously as a "honey bucket".

Col. Crawford informed the nurses they were to continue the training program as in Cirencester and they were on their own for inspecting officers were now busy with other things; he added that orders required the nurses to have French and German lessons. How this was to be managed was up to the Chief Nurse. Air raid alerts came often. England was meeting a new menace (Lt. Peto had told of shooting down one of Germany's new "mystery weapons"—a pilotless plane) and now these buzz bombs, as they came to be called, daily were taking tragic but futile toll of life and property. After Liberty's, Selfridge's and Paddington Station had been hit, even Mr. Churchill had to admit the bombs had reached London. One activity in Tidworth consisted of climbing aboard trucks with full personal equipment (2nd General Hospital equipment had been packed in cases and boxes since Oxford days) only to have a ride around the

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block, so to speak; in the Army this is called a "dry run". It is quite a job and as nurses were warned that at any time a dry run might turn out to be the real thing, a trip to the marshalling area, there was a grim determination to collect and cling to personal effects. Three mornings the nurses waved to a friendly British outfit off for field maneuvers; the third time the Tommies did not come back. There was baseball and volley ball; mail continued to find the group and the food was much better than at Cirencester. These factors made up for a lot.

Troops surrounded 2nd General on all sides and the nurses soon made friends with the men of the 109th Infantry, next field neighbors. They were part of General Patton's troops and the General had just given them a pep talk; he told them they had to clean up the Germans in one big hurry so they could get over and wipe out the Japs! The 109th was host at a dance given to celebrate the 4th of July; the outfit had a shed with a roof, a broken-down victrola and some flat beer but the party was given with a savoir-faire superior to background. It was here and from hospital personnel returning from DS on the coast that the first tales of German ruthlessness were disseminated. It was told how the first paratroopers coming down on the Continent were captured, wrapped in their own parachutes and bayonetted to death. American youths brought up in Public Schools acquire a sense of fair play and sportsmanship; the men were outraged at this atrocity and it was easy to believe the captains of ships bringing both American and German wounded back to England found it necessary to have Germans on one deck and Americans on the other—the Americans threatened to heave the Germans overboard.

Complying with orders the nurses started out one rainless day on a field trip; after three or four miles had been covered a wide open area was reached; the ground here instead of chalk was carpeted with bluebells and poppies and there was a hazy, somnolent sky above. The collapse was spontaneous; packs were dropped, figures sprawled, mouths yawned. Part of the group passed into dejected coma while the others indulged in post-war abberations, such as buying a plaid dress, green shoes, flowered hat, beaded handbags, candy-striped blouses, Mexican scarves and socks—anything to get

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the old OD out of the system and to hear people say—"There goes a veteran!"

There came the busy little put-put of a plane overhead; it was an Army Piper Cub which in descending spiral circled the group on the ground. The pilot appeared to be making gestures and the girls waved back languidly. The plane came lower and an arm swung in energetic signal.

"He's trying to tell us something," said one of the nurses.

"He's flirting," diagnosed another.

"It's our glamor—we've underestimated it."

"He's coming down! He's landing!"

A welcoming committee drifted over to the plane.

"Hey!" greeted the pilot, "do you know where you are?"

"England," guessed one of the heavy-hearted Nightingales.

"England, forever," amended another.

"It won't be for so long! You're in the middle of a firing range. D'yer want to be killed?"

"Oh, we thought you came down to give us a ride."

The pilot grinned; not sufficiently insulated against cajolery he gave two of the nurses a whirl in the Piper Cub after which he warned all of them to get the Christmas out of there, but quick. On the hike back someone said happily—"This is the nicest field trip you have ever taken us on, Matron; why didn't we do this before?"

An exciting thing happened during the stay in Tidworth. Lt. Helen Page Brown, who had been married two years before and whose husband had been a prisoner of war in Italy for one year, received a shock when Capt. Brown walked into camp one day! He and a British soldier had escaped from the prison camp and had been hiding two months in a haystack waiting for a chance to get help that would enable them to escape to England. The Silver Star had been awarded to Capt. Brown and had been presented to his wife in his absence. He looked thin and was very nervous but there was great jubilation at his return. Lt. Brown then received word that her

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brother, a paratrooper, had been taken prisoner; still later, she found out he had not shared the fate of the others but had survived. It was a time of terrific emotional strain. Lt. Brown's good news had one sad effect—some of the other nurses, on whom had descended tragedy, began to believe in miracles.

One morning Col. Crawford called the nurses together to announce that bedding rolls would go in three hours and the Unit would move into the marshalling area the next morning. When it came to packing each nurse had more items left over than could possibly be squeezed into her suitcase and close the lid; soldiers in the next field received some queer presents. Reveille at 4:30 A. M. next day. Because of blackout there was dressing and breakfasting in the dark; and it was cold. The area was policed, tent furniture disposed of, tent sides rolled up, blankets rolled and strapped on backs along with musette bags, gas masks, pistol belts and canteens. No one could sit down and the nurses knew they could never get their packs on again without help if they removed them. At one point in the journey they had to march down the main street of a town and the gawking and giggling at their weird appearance had to be borne. By various and sundry means of transportation the Unit moved into the marshalling area. The nurses were assigned to a barracks which bore a notice: "19 men". Women apparently had not been expected. Packs were shed and, mess kits in hand, there was a great clattering to the mess hall for a meal such as only the English can prepare. There were signs all around the mess hall: "Don't spill swill on the tables or the floors." A security warning followed—on the same line: "Keep it under your hat." It must be admitted some swell swill was donated to the garbage cans. The afternoon was taken up by standing in queues. First, English money was changed into French money; there was another queue for the 200 francs that was being "loaned" by the U. S. Gov't to all troops going to France at that time. Another queue for five packages of K-rations—where was it all going to be put? Then the line for delousing powder, water purifier tablets, D-ration (three chocolate bars), two vomiting bags, candy, matches, and a carton of cigarettes. Early to bed that night too tired to do anything else. The following day the nurses played bridge while they waited with ears attuned to the loud speaker system which an-

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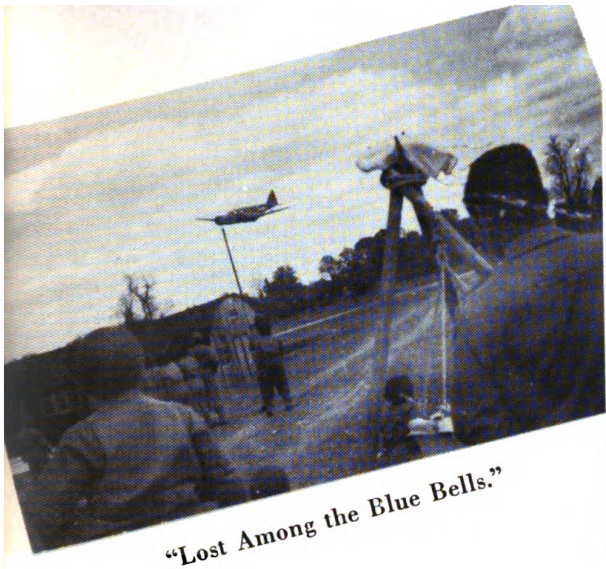
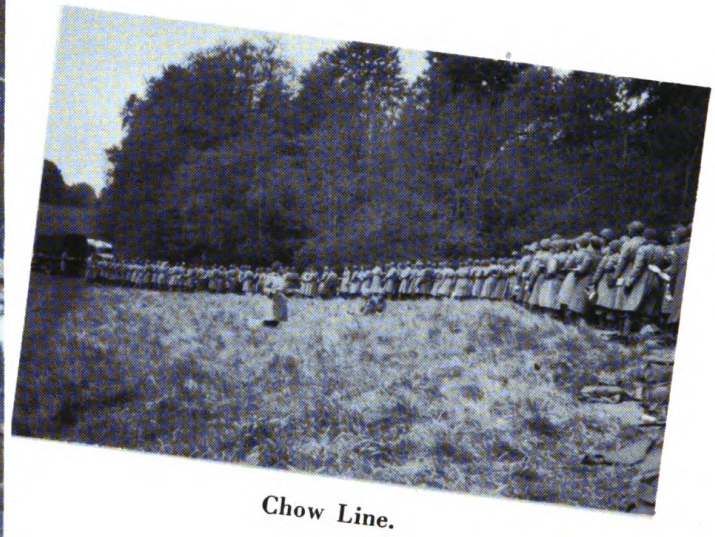


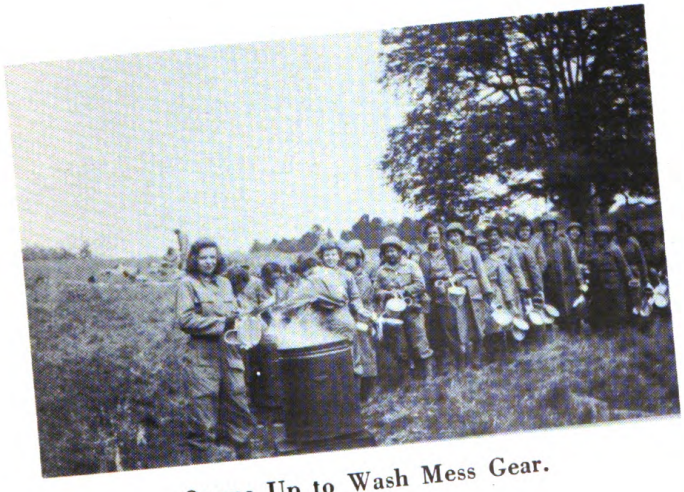
"Lost Among the Blue Bells."

"Fall In!"

"Gas!"



Chow Line.



Queue Up to Wash Mess Gear.

Washing Up.

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To Stand Retreat
at 5 o'clock.

Nurses' Tents
at Tidworth

Gerry, Evie and Mearnsie
at Tidworth

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nounced instructions for all units moving in or out. Lt. Madeline Young wrote of her experiences the next day:

After supper I concluded we wouldn't be moving immediately, we never do, and it seemed a grand opportunity to get everything cleaned up for what might be a long time to come. I am always cleaning up for the last time only to find that there is still one more chance to do it at the next place. So I washed all the clothes I was wearing including my woolen cap which is worn under the steel helmet, my gloves, socks, underwear, fatigue suit and even my towel and wash cloth. I planned to wear just my combat clothes and shoes until my clothing dried. We played bridge until one A. M. And were awakened at 6 A. M. with the news we were pulling out immediately. My clothes still were dripping wet! There was nothing to do but put them on, they were too wet to pack. The towel and wash cloth I wrapped in my raincoat. Soaking wet from cap to socks I tossed my combat clothes on top of all and strapped on my pack, then stood around moaning and groaning with everyone else until transportation arrived. Throughout the trip to the ship the girls kept saying—"What a beautiful day!" I could only chatter—"Y—yes," for I was freezing to death with the breeze blowing through my wet clothes as I rode in the open truck. I was ashamed to tell anyone how dumb I had been. It was late afternoon before I became completely dry.

Again the Unit was divided, two-thirds went out first on July 24th, calling—"Don't forget to come, Petie". The Chief Nurse and Col. Crawford were with the one-third left behind because there were no orders. Col. Crawford said all he knew:—he was with thirty-two women bound for Utah! On the trip from the marshalling area to the ship the nurses realized they were taking part in something really big; they were moving side by side with a formidable display of infantry and artillery. Madeline Young continues to tell how the first contingent of 2nd General reached Normandy:

On the ship male officers and nurses were to share the same large cabin for the overnight passage. The bunks were filthy. At first I couldn't bear the thought of putting my possessions on one, to say nothing of sleeping there; then I realized the bunks were not dirty because of neglect but because they had been used time and again by

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soldiers who were sweaty and dirty and weary, just as I was then. After that I didn't mind the bunks so much. We ate a meal of K-rations and went on deck to watch as we sailed out into the Channel. I thought of another crossing I had made under pleasanter circumstances. Just before supper the chaplains conducted a service on the open deck with everyone attending. After supper (K-rations) the USO group on board put on a show and then everyone retired. Because of the mixed company no one did much undressing! Went to sleep with my Mae West within reach—it was too dirty to wear under my chin. I will always remember the sight that greeted me when I went on deck next morning after a restless night. The water was so full of ships of all sizes and kinds it seemed possible to step from one to the other all the way to the shore of France! I don't know how they kept from ramming one another. Breakfast of K-rations. When it came our turn to unload, an LCT sailed up alongside and we had to *jump* into it. There were a few barrels piled up in the LCT to make steps but still it was a pretty big jump. Some old British salts were there to give us a hand; I made it with practically no damage to my skeleton. The EMs were the first to make the jump; then they all stood around to watch the nurses. A great cheer went up for each nurse who landed right side up. My chief concern was for the glass chimney to the kerosene lamp I was carrying; to this day, after moving more than eight times, it is still intact. Soon the craft was loaded and we were off to the coast of France and the closer we came to shore, the louder became the boom of the big guns. It was late afternoon when we landed; the "front gate" of the LCT yawned and we walked onto Utah Beach. It was very hot. We collapsed in the sand to wait for transportation to the bivouac area. It seemed cheap to talk. We were resting on the very sands where only a few days ago American men had died that we and all others who followed might come ashore in safety. The men had to march to the bivouac area and arrived with blistered feet; the women rode in trucks. All along the way the roads were marked with hastily made signs—"Cleared of mines to hedges". There were scarred hedgerows, broken apple trees and only the remains of farmhouses. France had had it. We had supper of—guess what?—K-rations and were pretty tired by then of chewing on those dog biscuits. They have been improved since that time. We had to walk a good distance for a canteen

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of water from the Lister bag; after coming to France all of us developed sentiment and respect for the good old Lister bag and wish we could tell Lt. Embury how we feel. Another convoy arrived to take us to another bivouac area for the night; by this time the noise of the big guns was louder and frightening, flak and tracers could be seen in the sky; it was well after dark and we found our blanket rolls and untied the knots by the Braille system.

The nurses of the second contingent, like the first, had to share quarters with the male troops on their ship. The crossing was smooth and there was no seasickness. There were canvas slings in which to sleep—pretty dirty. The Captain in charge of the troops on board and the Captain of the ship came to the Chief Nurse of the 2nd General to say that from 7:30 A. M. to 8:00 A. M., the nurses would be permitted to use the washroom which, at best, had limited facilities. It was suggested a sign be posted but the skipper of the ship was very proud of a new loud speaker, so the whole shipful was informed that the nurses on board had the "exclusive" use of the washroom for one half hour in the morning. The nurses were grateful for the "exclusive". The captain further said that showers could be taken before going to bed or during the day when a sign would be posted. There was a joker in that one. At night the water was turned off and during the day the ship was in a danger zone with everyone bundled to the eyes in life-belts. While the other two-thirds of 2nd General was eating K-rations, this ship's dining room was functioning; there were such niceties as white tablecloths, silver and good food; it was incongruous to sit at such a table in dirty fatigues and be waited on by a pleasant steward in a clean white jacket. There was the process of climbing into landing craft and being lowered to the sea and then taken to shore. While the group sat on the beach, listening to the big guns, waiting for transportation and wishing they were some other place, Lt. Caroline Renski opened her musette bag, brought out a lavender bow, removed her helmet and fastened the ribbon at a jaunty angle in her bright hair. It was done with such unconscious nonchalance the men standing around stared in fascination. Major Sheldon waggled his head and said—"Well! Now everything is under control."

Trucks arrived to take the nurses to the marshalling area; the

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men walked. All stayed there until 11:30 P. M. and had concluded they were there for the night when more trucks appeared to convey them to the bivouac area where they were to rejoin the first contingent of the 2nd General group. On this nightmare ride there was a continuous overtone of fireworks in the sky; explosions first near, then far, then "too damn near". There are those who maintain the convoy went to Cherbourg and others swear it skirted Paris; the real truth must have been that the driver of the leading truck was either lost or lamentably drunk; the local beverage was powerful stuff. That he was on the wrong road the unmistakable voice of an M. P., coming out of pitch blackness, assured him. The trucks carrying the medical group were halted parallel to another shadowy line of trucks loaded with infantry.

"You can't go any further this way," barked the M. P.; "this is the Third Army moving up to the front!"

There was a lack of the usual wisecracking that bubbles from G.I.s under almost every circumstance. Of what does a man think when going into action? Home? The one he loves best at the moment? Does he have to try hard to maintain that what-the-hell bravado? Inside, does he determine resolutely that if someone has to die it certainly is not going to be him? There was a burst of tired, treble laughter from one of the nurses and a feminine "Ouch!" as another tried to straighten a cramped leg. This was followed by an electric silence. Then from one of the combat troop trucks came an awed croak.

"My God! Women!"

There was consternation, incredulity and a suspicion of relief in the tone; it certainly was one of the occasions when women were not expected but the implication was—if they were here, things could not be so bad. Some of the old swagger came back.

At 3 A. M., bones shaken completely from their sockets, the nurses fell from the trucks to the ground in the proper bivouac area and could not believe their ears when the rest of their pals greeted them with:

"You goldbrickers! Where have you been?"

It may be better not to record the answer.

The Unit was in France.

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France — Normandy

SECOND GENERAL HOSPITAL UNIT arrived in France Monday and Tuesday, July 24 and 25, 1944, before the breakthrough at St. Lô; in fact the struggle was going on and the area on which the medical unit was bivouacked at Carentan was about five miles in back of the front lines. There was terrifying activity in the air. Some of the nurses had been through fairly rough stuff in London but most of them admitted they were paralyzed with fright the first few nights in Normandy when all hell seemed to be breaking loose in the sky. An advance detail had gone ahead to pitch tents and dig foxholes; the doctors dug "individual" foxholes but in moments of stress it was demonstrated that ten men can, and did, fit into a space whittled originally for one! Some of the nurses spent the first nights in foxholes while ruefully recalling a department store advertisement in a home newspaper the Christmas before: "Pillows for foxholes". At the time it had seemed very funny. Other nurses curled up in their blankets on the stretcher cots, removing their helmets for greater comfort and hastily grabbing them again when the booms and bangs sounded too near. The first night the whine of a shell was heard coming nearer, nearer—then it stopped. A bad moment; breaths were held waiting for the explosion. None came. Next morning by the officers' latrine lay the shell that had failed to explode. It now bore a sign: "Beware! Unexploded rocket bomb." Also that first night in France one of 2nd General's buglers (the serious one from Ft. Meade days) distinguished himself; there was not a cubic foot of sky in which something was not coming apart, scattering orange fire and deadly missiles. With everyone shrinking prudently down in the foxholes, indeed into their skins, this boy stood on the burning deck sounding the "imminent danger" alarm!

"Get down—you blankety blank fool!" An arm shot out of a foxhole, grabbed one of the bugler's feet and his brave silhouette vanished from its glowing background.

One night six enemy planes were shot down; one, a JU 88, burst into flames in the air and then crashed three hedgerows away. The debris, including the crew of four, was scattered over five fields.

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Those who had watched it in fear the night before, examined the wreckage in awe the next morning and heard Col. Crawford say:

"There but for the Grace of God, and a half mile, went one liquidated hospital unit."

After having slept and lived in the same clothes for four nights and days, with only a helmet in which to wash, a trip in a weapons' carrier to a decontamination center for showers was profoundly appreciated. A few nurses had their hair cut off short for very good reasons. For those who still think of an Army nurse as a ministering angel in white with soft hands which soothe fevered brows (and a surprising number of people persist in treasuring that image), there is another angle which for the sake of the record should be told. Lt. Madeline Young tells it in a continuation of her letter:

If you will forgive me, I will tell some of the problems that a woman, and I suppose a man also, faces in war. Our ladies' powder room was a slit trench. No seats over it and the boys with the shovels always seemed to get a great deal of fun in digging the trench too wide; no one was sufficiently indelicate to report the situation. The trench was surrounded by a canvas wall that sagged, anyone of more than average height could look over the top. The trying ordeal was put off usually until after dark as there seemed to be less indignity incurred then. But that was bad too, for the shooting always got heavier after dusk; we were at the core of a cone, surrounded by artillery and anti-aircraft that fired over our heads, the shots converging at our apex directly above. One night I was in "there", peaceful and alone, when the shooting started. It was low and coming from behind. "Oh dear! I'm going to get shot from the rear; better to see what's coming." So I did an about face. Immediately the shooting started to come from that direction. Then from both sides. I gave up in disgust and walked back to my foxhole. Perhaps I ran. Some of the girls are still suffering from those days and have become addicted to mineral oil cocktails. In England where we had nearly all the luxuries of home (in comparison), it seemed there was always something of which to complain; in France, where we dispensed with civilization altogether, no one griped. There was a group spirit that has never been surpassed or equalled; we all came to know each

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other better and discovered that even the worst of us was pretty decent. We practically worship our Chief Nurse and our Commanding Officer; both have proved equal to every situation no matter how trying.

The Germans had flooded the land as they left; engineers were draining it but it takes only a jiffy for a mosquito to get busy and the pests, plus the ankle-deep mud, added much to the general discomfort. Arctic overshoes were worn continuously. Meals diluted with rain were eaten from mess gear while sitting on the ground or standing up to watch airplanes taking off from airstrips that still were unfinished. A road had been repaired; vehicles and artillery rolled by in both directions in a never-ending, rumbling stream. Across the road engineers already were laying the cement foundations for 5th General Hospital. The score was evened, their hospital would be operating first; the personnel was happy and the minute their cement was dry they invited 2nd General to come over and dance on it. Cider bought from the French with the new invasion money was served from helmets. It did not take long to discover that calvados, a sort of brandy made from apples, was the local beverage; to Americans it was dynamite and evoked "never again" hangovers. The site for 2nd General Hospital (Lison Gare) was not quite ready, the dead had to be buried—the Americans, the Germans and a pitiful pile of horses and cattle; by the time the Unit moved in, there was nothing left but the smell. The chapel was not ready of course and the chaplain was assisting at the burial of the dead, so the first Sunday in France, July 31st., the nurses attended a Peace Mass in the local village church. It was packed to the doors with American soldiers in dirty fatigues, field boots, and helmets; they occupied all the pews, the choir loft and they even stood in the aisles. Guns were deposited in piles on the floor, against the organ and against the sides of the altar. A corporal asked permission to play the organ and the priest, a bearded patriarch, readily consented. Three times the offering plates were filled to overflowing; certainly never before had the little church benefited by such a spontaneous and liberal outpouring. Even allowing for the clatter of gas masks and helmets, the Chief Nurse, in listening to the sermon delivered in rapid French, had a suspicion her French was going to be far from adequate, for not one

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word was intelligible to her. She began to wonder how she was going to solve her problems in a country where no one would understand her, or she them.

The first week all but a few nurses were sent to Evacuation Hospitals; those remaining helped to set up their own hospital which went together with record-breaking speed. X-ray unit, operating rooms, laboratory, wards,—all under tents. Personnel tents, plus kitchen, went up in three hours. After the Unit equipment was collected, the hospital was opened exactly two weeks after the site had been chosen. Three weeks after the nurses had been sent to the Evacuation Hospitals they were recalled. All were grateful for the experience they had in this detached service but the Chief Nurse was pleased that they seemed so happy to be back; later, when given another opportunity to join evacuation hospital groups, they refused. General Hospitals are appreciated especially because patients remain in them longer; doctors and nurses have a better chance to watch the progress and recovery of their special cares. Also, the nurses of 2nd General were reluctant to leave their own group; 80 nurses out of the 83 had come over on the Duchess of Bedford together and had been through Oxford days side by side. To those coming back from the smaller tent hospitals, their first view of a General Hospital under canvas was a bewildering one. The number of tents of various sizes seemed endless and it was declared it would have been easier to have left General Supply in England; it could have been reached faster by air than by the direction—"a few fields over, a few fields down and a few fields up." At first the nurses lived in ward tents, sixteen to a tent; later they lived in pyramidal tents, four to a tent. The installation was situated in the heart of an enormous apple orchard whose trees were hung with bunches and swags of mistletoe and not until it is seen growing this way does anyone realize what a parasite the romantic vine is. For weeks the dining room was the great outdoors. Apple blossom time in Normandy was over but the bees knew spring would come again and in the meantime here were the rich Americans with food. They contested every mouthful and the more persistent got swallowed. Note to the curious: a bee tastes sweet. They flew down unwary necks; their stings, which felt like tetanus shots, raised bumps on eyelids, noses and lips. One man was so

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poisoned he was entered in the hospital—casualty of an insect. DDT helped kill the fleas and the lice but the big four-motor jobs were more difficult to discourage. They got so bad, night nurses had to sleep under nets as if in the tropics. Not a soul in camp that wouldn't have settled for earwigs.

At first there were no lights at all, the hospital had kerosene lamps; electricity finally was generated by dynamo for the hospital tents and the lamps were passed on to the nurses for their quarters. There was no place to put anything but the ground and the girls literally lived out of their suitcases. There was a scrounging for boxes out of which to make furniture; the Chief Nurse turned carpenter and hewed and hammered a desk, a stool and some file cases from ammunition boxes left by the Germans. They left some green burlap also which came in handy. The front line moved further away but Normandy towns were "off limits" to troops, nor was it safe even to take a walk; the territory was being cleared of land mines but among the first casualties to arrive were small children who, straying from their homes to play in the fields, had arms or legs blown off and sometimes were blinded. Tots in the road waved to the nurses but they gave the Heil Hitler salute as often as they did the V for Victory; it is unlikely either gesture made sense to them. One of the most pressing problems in getting a hospital to function is laundry. The Army supplied tent hospitals with mobile laundry units and in Normandy peasant women willingly undertook to do the officers' personal clothing but each week the latter raised the price and demanded more soap. The Chief Nurse battled about it but concluded her French must be misleading for the women slapped their thighs and roared with laughter, kept the soap and continued to wash clothes in the brook over stones. Soap was non-existent but there were plenty of stones. It was no easy task to keep account of clothes that went into private homes, came back unsorted and with one bill; the only other recourse was to wash fatigues in a helmet and beg the water man to rinse them when he came to fill the Lister bags. The water man was also beautician to the nurses; with spine-chilling squirts from a hose, soap suds were rinsed from hair and eyes.

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On August 19, 1944, the Chief Nurse wrote:

Bill drove in last night with two jeeps and a trailer full of his buddies. The 9th Air Force is now in France in a camp not 25 miles from here. Bill is an ace pilot now and also a member of the Caterpillar Club, which means he had to bail out over the Channel when his plane was hit as he flew over Belgium returning from a mission. I can tell you now because he is all right but he had a bad moment when he saw his own plane break into two pieces and burst into flames. Falling, up-side-down, the controls to the cockpit jammed and he couldn't get out; he worked at them desperately while thinking—"What a hell of a way to die!" He doesn't like to talk about it. The controls finally worked for, after banging his head until he was nearly unconscious, he found himself in the air and still sensible enough to pull the ripcord of his chute. When it opened he saw his plane falling on each side of him, the burning half near enough to spatter the parachute with oil. Luckily, it did not catch on fire. He came down in the water not far from the English coast and, as watchers had seen him, he was picked up and taken to a cottage where a friendly family gave him tea. An ambulance took him to a First Aid Station where a puncture in his leg (not too serious) was dressed and his bruised head bandaged. He got back to his camp in the wee small hours to find his name posted on the blackboard—M. I. A. (Missing in Action). The 9th Air Force was ready to move over to France and its present camp was extremely rough; most of the pilots were sleeping on the floor but it seems Bill had secured the luxury of a table on which to sleep. He found it empty on his return for no airman would sleep on it—that night anyway. He crossed his name off the board, climbed onto his bed and went to sleep. In the A. M. everyone surprised and happy! After listening to him we got Col. Crawford and more nurses and had a congratulations celebration in festive beverage. Another night, other pilots dropped in, those who had come over on the Duchess of Bedford with us. Men from the 1st Division called on us too; it was wonderful to have friends from the *Vestals' Retreat* show up— the 1st Division had come over on D-day. They all look thin but have been living on K-rations like the rest of us; when they will talk of the things they have been through, we believe in miracles. The front is

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moving away so fast there is little use for the foxholes now; the pilots tell how they get briefed for a mission and when they get over the target frantic messages are radioed from the ground: "For God's sake, don't drop your bombs here—we are Americans!" Bill buzzed us yesterday on his way home from a mission, so we are both O.K. to date.

Love;

Marjorie.

2nd General continued to grow and by the end of August it covered 60 acres. From the first there were prisoners of war in camp; those who were not patients in the hospital worked under guard digging drainage ditches, making cement foundations and laying pebbled walks which were intended to help combat the mud. Their barbed-wire stockade was next to the nurses' quarters and the POWs could be heard singing and playing games in the evenings. Too, German soldiers like to sing as they march and late one afternoon as the Chief Nurse stood in the opening of her tent she heard a lusty chorus accompanied by what sounded like the crash of cymbals. Her eyes popped as a returning work detail passed. The American guard, a large Negro with toothy grin, his rifle slung across his back *out of the way*, led the triple line of singing German prisoners; in each hand he held a shining metal pie plate which he crashed together keeping time for marching feet! American planes were still having dog fights overhead but the ground between the advancing troops and the hospital had been taken over by the Liberated French whose nervous custom it was to shoot first and shrug afterwards. There was little danger of the POWs trying to escape for they vastly preferred the safety of American barbed-wire to the arms of the jittery and vengeful French. An outraged officer may have caught up with this unmilitary parade and no telling what happened to the guard. A pity; everyone having such a good time.

German patients were the sickest in the hospital; their wounds were infected and they were poorly nourished. Some were very young, they said 18 years, but x-rays of their bones proved them to be younger. They were so foul-smelling and filthy it was an unpleasant task to clean them; one of the nurses working at it could not eat her supper and declared:

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"I've had the kind of day that it would be nice to come off duty and find a dozen roses next to my chaise longue in my warm room!"

German patients did not like to be sent to England for they had been told that England was being destroyed by robot bombs and they were afraid; those slated to be sent to the U. S. A. seemed tickled to death about it. Later, when trainloads of prisoners arrived from Brest, they were dumbfounded to find they were the last Germans left fighting in France. The Hospital cared for wounded Fighting French (there were French Congo patients of frightening aspect—huge gold ear-rings, filed teeth and egg-shaped heads!) and for French civilians hurt in road accidents or by exploding bombs. Citizens flocked back to their destroyed homes and dug among the ruins to salvage something of use. American patients were undaunted and asked for little attention; their main reaction was one of surprise and deep pleasure to find themselves between sheets and with a soft pillow under their heads. One man with bullet wounds up and down his back, from shoulders to ankles, was asked what had happened to him.

"I was hit by an 88 and I couldn't crawl into my helmet any further."

In a block of five ward tents (150 beds) there were only three faucets for water, no running water in the tents. Each ward tent had three large cans; one for cold water, one for hot, the third for waste. When it rained (and the rains came!) the tent flaps had to be closed. Bending to get in and out of ward tents, the supply tent, kitchen tent and all the other tents, was hard on the back; these factors made the care of patients more difficult and it was not possible to be as speedy as desired. All the beds were high American beds for which the nurses and doctors were thankful. It was fortunate the enlisted men had been so well trained to help and the ambulatory patients were wonderful about caring for the slightly wounded. The climax of emergencies was reached one midnight as a night nurse was splashing through mud on her way to supper and was dragged into the Receiving Tent just in time to usher into the world an impatient French baby who refused to wait for a more opportune time.

On August 22, 1944, Paris was proclaimed liberated! American patrols had been in the city for two weeks. By Sept. 5th, Col. Rous-

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selot and his 108th General Hospital Unit were established in a beautiful building in Paris and it was felt in Normandy that they might be ordered to join him. Again it seemed as if the WACs got the breaks for they too were in Paris going about in Class A uniforms. Naturally the cry among 2nd General nurses was: When can we see Paris? It is just as well some of them could not know under what circumstances they were to see it.

Following a nice but brief spell of warmth the weather in September became worse than it had been in England, which means it rained *all* the time. Downpours. On the tents it sounded like the roar of Niagara; the ropes tightened, pegs gave way, in the high wind the canvas took off for the States or else collapsed, a sodden weight, quite often on some unfortunate. No one had dry clothes; a few nurses slept in their shoes for if they had taken them off they never would have got them on again. One nurse slithered into the Chief Nurse's office one day—her "box office" as the C. O. called it. She was dripping mud and water and stuttering with desperation.

"It's the last straw! The last straw!" she sobbed. "I've worn wet clothes, sat in the mud for my meals, been stung by bees, but when the latrine blows down when I am sitting in it and the place is surrounded by POWs digging in the trenches,—Miss Peto, *I want to go home!*"

The arrival some time later of a six-holer with a real roof was greeted like a sable coat for Christmas; members of the sorority who met in this club room, today complain of the loneliness they suffer in their pastel-tinted, violet-scented in-houses!

One day a group of nurses in their weather-stained fatigues sat under the apple trees in the shallowest part of the mud; tired of fried Spam and canned corn they were having a treat. One contributed a can of lobster brought across the Channel in her bedding roll, another had crackers and salted nuts; when a bottle of champagne appeared it was popped with as much ceremony as if it had been lifted from a bed of crushed ice in a silver bucket. Lt. Mary Brundage, lobster sandwich in one hand and a canteen cup full of the bubbly water raised to her lips, exclaimed—"I feel exactly like Diamond Jim Brady!"

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As the fall months advanced, the temperature dropped and the rain turned to a coating of ice on the tents; it was like living in an igloo. Came the problem of heat. The folks at home were sending sleeping bags and the home hospital was sending the nurses a gasoline stove, all of which arrived in due time and were put to comforting use. In the meantime the nurses rigged up a little can filled with dirt which they set into a larger can; four ounces of gasoline was poured over the dirt and a match thrown in; a wire coat hanger made a grate and coffee was cooked over the blaze. It was not as dangerous as it sounds—to a quick jumper. By the end of October stoves were installed in all the tents. It was mandatory to be most economical with the coal which was shipped in; ashes were burned over three times before they were allowed to be thrown away. There was not much time for extracurricular activities for the nurses were working from 12 to 14 hours a day. When they came off duty they brought in coal and wood, emptied ashes, built fires, filled kerosene lamps, got drinking water, hauled in wash or did more laundering. Of course they never got up in time to build fires before dressing and all learned to hate lacing leggings with cold, stiff fingers. There was talk of aching joints and rheumatism. Amusements were few. Movies were attended in raincoats, hoods and arctics; the movie tent leaked at its seams, the benches had no backs, the floor was slippery with mire and the pictures had queer titles, like; "The Curse of the Cat People." But they were movies and everyone went. Meager news coming over BBC from a radio belonging to Transportation, was typed and put on the camp bulletin board; no one saw the *Stars and Stripes* any more. Although it was against regulations two enlisted men went on a scouting expedition for something to cheer the inner man. They found a small wine shop in a nearby village; the owner had buried most of her stock when the Germans came, keeping out just enough to pretend to stay in business. When the Americans came, the stock also came back; it was astonishing to see what came out of the ground after the Liberation — fine wines and brandies, perfume, art treasures, young men! The shopkeeper produced a bottle of calvados and named a price. Enlisted men are fair game because generally they are careless with their money; there is little to do with it and foreign exchanges and invasion money values had them confused. Their custom was to produce a hand full of

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money and let the shopkeepers help themselves to what they were supposed to have. This trustfulness was fatal; the soldiers got "taken" every time. It happened in England and it happened in France. But the 2nd General G.I.s were getting smart.

"What did you charge the Germans for this hooch?"

The reply: The Germans had not paid anything—they had taken what they wanted.

"Then do you think it fair to soak us that price?"

The inevitable shrug. "You Americans have bombed and wrecked our homes; we must get money to rebuild them."

The men who told the story afterward said, "You figure it out, Major; us guys are only fighting the war."

It must be said in all fairness that many of the Normandy farmers were grateful to the Americans for the care given to their children and to their wounded; those whose animals and orchards had not been totally destroyed brought presents of rich, heavy cream and fresh fruits into the hospital. Major Peto and Lt. Willette Mosser were invited to the home of a French lady one evening; she was a woman of culture, had two pretty-mannered little girls, spoke some English and played the piano beautifully. Both visitors were shocked to see her hair shaved close to her head; French patriots had done that as they had to all women accused of being collaborationists. Her offence—housing German officers during the Occupation. She told her guests that her husband was a prisoner of war in Germany and that the Germans had told her it would be "wise" of her to conform with their plans for housing and feeding German officers. She was nervous and seemed to feel the disgrace bitterly; the law made the mob sign a statement retracting the act but the damage was done. Near Madame's home and within sight of the hospital there was a Hostage Cemetery which followed a pattern to be seen all over France. A marker stood where a German soldier had been killed; surrounding were 20 markers where Frenchmen had been shot in reprisal.

All this time the food at 2nd General, mostly dehydrated, was adequate if tiresome; fresh vegetables, fresh meat and butter were

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greatly missed. It was a marvel that anything at all was received for the hospital was in a position to see the working of a stupendous operation. General Patton was doing a magnificent job and if transportation was getting fresh food to the front line troops, it was all right with the rear echelon. When official business took two officers to a town several miles along the only available road in working condition, M.P.s peremptorially waved them off the highway. Sitting on the sidelines, the officers watched for four hours, gun after gun go by, all mounted on swift-moving vehicles; then, truck after truck of ammunition. All for General Patton. It was awe-inspiring and never again will there be such a sight for the style in conflicts will surely change.

Because of restrictions which confined troops to their own posts over such a long period, "Liberty Runs" were instituted as a morale measure to give recreation to enlisted men. The trips included Granville, where the sea dashed spectacularly against high cliffs; Cherbourg, so dreary and dirty, where soldiers (when they were not joyfully skirmishing with collaborationists) stood on long queues to purchase the meanest postcards; and Mont-Saint-Michel. Many visitors climbed the well-worn ancient stone steps to the celebrated Benedictine abbey and fortress which tops the cone-shaped rock; once an island, the Mont now is connected with the mainland by a causway. On the descent souvenirs could be bought at small shops—wooden sabots, trinkets and peasant pottery. One nurse purchased a winsome donkey of Quimper ware; he wore a saddlebag, each pocket of which contained a bottle. One was labeled "H"—the other "V". The nurses said that stood for Henry V., which shows they had been in England too long; the initials were French for Oil and Vinegar. Little donkeys drawing two-wheeled carts, houses with window-sills and walks lined with potted geraniums (great shell hole in one house but the pots of geraniums remained intact in the debris, still holding flowering plants) and wooden shoes (clop-clop) were part of the Normandy scene. So were little boys, ten or eleven years old, smoking cigarettes. Two officers from 2nd General had their first French meal in Mont-Saint-Michel. Halves of hard-boiled eggs with cream sauce and pickled beets; warm bread with "hunks" of sweet butter; a foaming omelette made with real eggs; steak and french fried po-

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Officers' Call

Where the JU 88 Was Shot Down.

Ruins of St. Lô.

Chow: Fighting the Bees.
Normandy Mess Hall!

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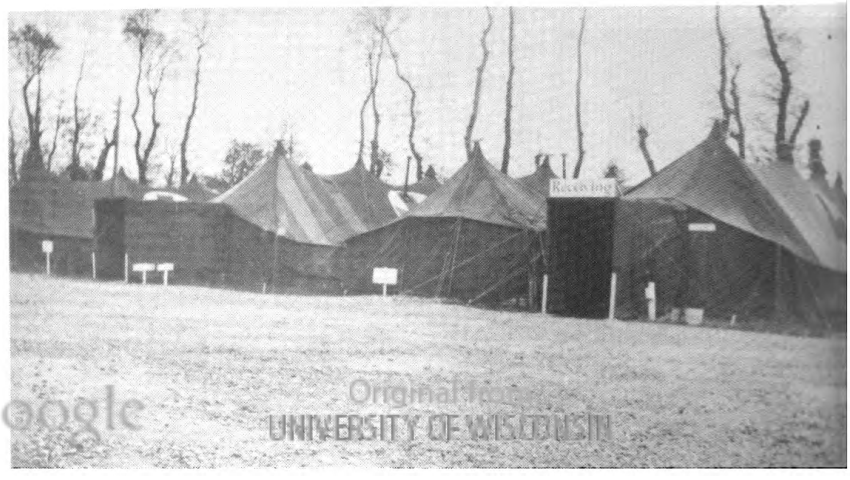
Lister Bag.

Stop! Sign In! Sign Out!

Shampoo in the Field.



Receiving Tent for Patients.

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tatoes; a tossed salad; custard and cheese—all washed down with a bottle of Chablis. Mythological. It was not to last. Collaborationists were credited with having poisoned the food eaten by some American servicemen which had caused their deaths. Again, Orders: All public eating places in France, all native foodstuffs, off limits to American troops. In Paris there was weeping and wailing for while there was not much food in the city, the fun of going to a famous cafe, tucking knees under a table, meeting friends and enjoying civilized food and drink, was part of the dream of every G.I. who had earned or wangled a leave. One nurse told how she, her escort and some friends, all in the services, handed over their K-rations to the chef in one restaurant; when it came back to them from the kitchen the meal was hot, savory and garnished with such appetizing appeal, no one could recognize good old K!

By November, 2nd General was practically a POW hospital. The atmosphere on the POW wards was not pleasant; no one refused to work on them but the nurses were not happy, in spite of slightly better working conditions. There now was a Nissen hut operating room and the Red Cross had one of the fine prefabricated buildings brought over from the States by General Lee. On his arrival the General was quartered in buildings and his houses were distributed to the tent hospitals. At this time many new General Hospitals arrived; the 189th was attached to 2nd General and bivouacked in an adjacent field. Freshly arrived from the States, all in Class A uniforms, they took a sour view of the local swampland but received little sympathy —who were they to be bored so soon with apples? An effort was made to tell them what the area had been like the July before; no one would listen. Rumors flew again! 2nd General was going to Germany. 2nd General was going to China. Persistent Pollyannas were sure 2nd General, because of long and faithful service, was going home. Perhaps Christmas in New York! In the meantime hospital trains continued to roll in bearing heavy loads of wounded Americans and Germans both; en route the patients had spent two days in a wonderful hospital in Paris which they described as having many stories, parquet floors and elevators. They admitted though that here they received better food. The American patients told the nurses how pretty the women were in Paris and how beautifully they

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were dressed. And the amazing hats they wore! It was fantastic that a nurse from the HDQ of the Normandy Base Section visited the hospital at this time in her capacity of adviser to Chief Nurses who might be having "problems"; as the problem of the hour in 2nd General was how to get out of an apple orchard, the visitor failed to be helpful with her suggestion that the Chief Nurse give her charges a series of lectures on "modern styles".

On November 21, 1944, the 189th General Hospital Unit took over the tent hospital. The next day Col. Crawford called the personnel together and told them they had earned the privilege of moving forward. There was another scramble to scale personal possessions down to what could be wrapped in a bedding roll. The French were willing recipients of many gifts and one man was so grateful for his present he sent the nurses a capon; it was a tough, stringy bird but it had bones and was neither dehydrated nor frozen. In an effort to check on the safety of her nephew, Bill Peto, the Chief Nurse took a hurried trip to the camp of the 9th Air Force only to find it bare and clean as if vacuumed. The 9th had moved into Belgium. Lt. Peto had earned and been promised a leave home to the States for Christmas and it was thought he must be on his way. It was a leave he was not to get, in spite of his many missions, for the first moves had been made by the enemy in their surprise breakthrough in Belgium. While people in England and the United States, as well as the prophets in the medical outfit, were slapping each other on the back and saying—"It won't be long now!"—the tragedy of the *Battle of the Bulge* was gathering momentum under a thick blanket of protecting fog which grounded the Allied Air Forces for days. Tired pilots like Bill who had been promised leaves were hastily called upon to make further exertions. As they themselves put it, "It's all to do over again!"

At 11 o'clock on November 23rd., a call came to send 60 nurses to hospitals in the Seine District to serve on DS. The train for them was in and there was no time to make a careful list; the first 60 nurses the Chief Nurse met were told to pack and be ready to go at one o'clock. The cooks got out the holiday turkeys and gave the nurses their Thanksgiving dinner before they left. The train pulled

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out in the pouring rain and in mud-caked combat suits and boots the nurses waved and shouted—

"Petie! Get us back for Christmas!"

On November 25th, Thanksgiving Day, after having sat up "alerted" all night in the cold, the 25 nurses left in Normandy, plus dietitians, P.T. Aids, Red Cross workers and 250 enlisted men with Lt. Col. P. Putnam Lloyd as acting C. O., pulled out in a hospital train whose improvised box cars inspired new sympathy for the wounded. The train was headed for Paris. Col. Crawford, with the executive officers and a few enlisted men, had gone on ahead as an advance detail to prepare a bivouac area in a caserne (French military camp) at Revigny, a small town on the Moselle River in eastern France.

Goodby tent hospital! Goodby apple orchard!

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France — Detached Service

EXCERPTS from letters tell the story of the exodus from Normandy and something of what happened to the nurses of 2nd General while on Detached Service. Lt. Madeline Young, leaving with the first group, Major Herbert Wilcox acting C. O., wrote:

When our Chief Nurse told 60 of us to hurry up and pack, we were to leave in two hours, there was Bedlam. I'll never know how we did it; blankets, suitcases and bedding rolls were tossed into trucks. We looked like orphans in the storm; the mud was awful in that apple orchard and don't let anyone ever tell you France is sunny —I scarcely recall one clear day. Two nights and two days were spent on a hospital train; we ate bread and cheese, bread and jam, bread and peanut butter and just bread. There were no lights in the one coach but by this time we had learned to carry candles when traveling. The sleeping quarters were box cars with stretchers three decks high. I drew one on the floor but preferred to sit up all night in the coach; of course no one removed clothing. At 3 A. M. on the second night we were ordered to be out of the train in ten minutes— it was to be loaded with patients. There was utter confusion in finding possessions for we were packed in like sardines and by this time just as smelly. All I lost out of the deal was my comb and mistletoe but we were out in the required time and playing follow the leader around box cars and across tracks in the pitch blackout and pouring rain. Have you ever noticed in the movies how it rains whenever troops are moving? That's because it always does rain then. The next thing we knew we were in a Red Cross waiting room being served doughnuts and hot coffee; in a few moments the Red Cross was eaten right into bankruptcy. We were a sorry looking bunch but there were several G.I.s around who, as usual, proved adequate to a situation that called for gallantry; they showed us where the powder room was, hauled in our field bags, seated us in chairs and then demanded the latest news from home. They thought we had just come from the States! There were no orders for us at the station so our Major called HDQ for instructions; three hours later someone arrived to assign us and arrange for transportation. Bedding and blanket rolls which had been tossed off the train onto the station

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platform were soggy with rain, mud and oil; it was a job to separate them for all of us were not being assigned to the same place. During the interval that we were at the station we watched in the dim light the hospital train being loaded. Dirty and unattractive as we were, every soldier who could see us and talk had a wisecrack to make as he was being put onto the train. Those guys never lose their sense of humor.

Finally transportation came. Ruth Owen and I, with eight others, were assigned to the same hospital, the 108th General in Paris —Lt. Col. "Pete" Rousselot, C. O. It was 6:30 A. M. when we were deposited in the glistening tile, plate glass lobby. The Chief Nurse was not expecting us so there was no place ready for us to stay; she took us to breakfast, keeping a safe distance for we looked disreputable and she undoubtedly suspected the worst. Apparently she had never done nursing in the field. After breakfast, while waiting for our quarters to be made ready, she gave us a lecture on morals and how to behave in a large city. We were so tired we could have dropped to the floor. Then she said none of us need go to work that day; none of us had any intention of doing so. Nevertheless Paris had been waited for a long time! Ruth and I dragged out Class A uniforms, that we had been sleeping on since last June, and made ourselves as neat as possible and set out; did pretty well, too, for we got in with a Red Cross tour. It seemed strange to wear a dress on duty the following morning. The charge nurse was kind enough to give me two hours in the afternoon so I could go to quarters, unpack and arrange my things in order to live more comfortably, for we were wretchedly crowded. After supper that night Ruth and I were told to pack and be ready to move to another hospital in the morning. It was another last straw! I was nearly hysterical with fatigue. During the night I had terrific peristaltic pains with vomiting and by morning was so ill Ruth had to pack everything for me and get us into a truck. No trains to contend with but much too ill to care what happened to me. At the new hospital, the 203rd, I was just able to get to my room and was ill for ten days after that with food poisoning.

We worked very hard at the 203rd; the nurses' quarters were on a high hill—89 steps up from the road! We were on the fourth floor with no elevators. The ward I worked on was three flights up but the building was down the hill; the mess hall was at the foot of

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"Coronary Hill". The patients were crowded in worse than watchers in Times Square on New Years Eve and were on the low, French beds —so hard on the backs of nurses and doctors. Wounded soldiers apologized for being so dirty when they came in, as if any of them could have kept clean in battle. They were so grateful for shaves, toothbrushes and clean linen; we had plenty of clean linen in that hospital but not always the time to use it; bars of soap were cut in four or five pieces so each patient could have a little. During one emergency I had about 50 dressings to change with exactly three instruments at my disposal; with no time to boil them between dressings, we relied on strong lysol solution. The soldiers were so good and uncomplaining. I've often heard them say—

"See what he wants, nurse; he's sicker than I am. I can wait."

One morning I was waiting on a 19-year-old lad from Texas. "Good morning, Virgil; isn't it a lovely day?"

He answered, "Yes, lieutenant; it's such a lovely day I'd go out and take a walk if I had my legs." Both had been blown off.

Sometimes when we offer sympathy (as a rule we do not for most of the men hate it), they say; "But nurse, you are only seeing us. You ought to see the boys we left behind." One man with terrible burns and two broken legs said; "I'm lucky. My buddie was buried alive right beside me in a mess of falling stones." It is amazing—each one thinks he is lucky!

Happy as we were, we became increasingly anxious as the days rolled by to rejoin our unit in the forward area and to get our own 2nd General Hospital operating again; after two and a half years overseas it was sad that we should all be separated for our third Christmas and New Years. But such is war. On Christmas Eve I lent my lovely voice to the hospital group who sang carols to the patients. There had been no desire to decorate the wards and no room for a single Christmas tree but the Red Cross gave each patient a stocking with nice little gifts in them and there was a grand dinner for both patients and personnel. Christmas night Ruth and I had a bottle of champagne in our room. Ditto for New Years Eve.

My love to all;

Madeline Young.

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Lt. Elizabeth Fisher, who also went with the first group, tells her version:

Dec. 3, 1944

Dear Petie;

I, too, rated a litter flush with the floor on that train, only mine was right opposite the honey-bucket latrine! I didn't mind too much, not even after Ruthie Owen overturned a can of disinfectant over the floor. It was definitely an advantage to be skinny and a seconal helped me to get to sleep. I woke up once to feel Esther Johnson's hand clawing at my face apparently under the impression she was reaching for her helmet. That automatic gesture! At noon we got to Le Mons and Capt. Jarvis dashed in for a hasty visit; so did Ada Mutch who had three minutes to say "Hello" before we pulled out again. We were scheduled to detrain in the late afternoon but there was a bridge out ahead and it caused long delay. At 3 A. M. next morning we were turned out in the rain at a station; our train needed immediately for wounded. Madeline wrote you of our wait in that station. About 6 A. M. our bedding rolls and other duffle were rescued from the puddles of tar, grease and rain and we were piled into ambulances bound, of all places, for "Pete's Palace" in Paris. And what a palace the 108th General is! Dirty and streaked with grime, you haven't a notion of how we felt as we dripped on the pristine lobby. No sign of Pete himself (just as well!) but the Chief Nurse's first words of greeting were: "Baths will be available by afternoon." I don't know why she thought it a good moment to demonstrate the lay-out of the hospital but that is what she did; after several tin bonnets crashed to the tile floor she thought better of it and escorted us to the washroom and thence to breakfast. About 10 A. M. cots had been assembled in an annex dedicated to unfortunates on DS; one cot to each room already crowded with two other people. We moved in bag and baggage and had to get out Class A regalia to make it presentable before we could appear in the mess hall for turkey at lunch. The unhappy discovery was made that cold water only was available to us and baths once a week in the hydrotherapy room. Just as homey as a castle in England. To be warm enough in seersucker uniforms with only the normal complement of underclothing the next day on duty seemed incredible; so did working so many stories above sea-

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level, so to speak. And to hear traffic on the streets. The walk from the hospital to our quarters put us in mind of the trek from Harkness to Maxwell Hall and it was so much like working in P. H. that we half expected to see Miss Young coming down the wide, spacious corridors. Only—all the signs, and there was a profusion of them, were in German while the civilian help kept asking questions in French—very confusing.

Nurses were on duty from 7 to 7, with 3 hours off; no last hours and only one half day per week. We also rotated, taking call in the evening until 10 P. M., in case too many hospital trains came in at once, as the 108th was run as an Evacuation Hospital. It was lots of fun working again in the old manner but, dear Lord!, the tile floors were hard to take after the cushiony ooze of Normandy. Some of the nurses had "floor burned" feet. And the spit and polish and general formality made us homesick for our tent hospital, believe it or not. After working four days and finally getting all my clap-trap nicely settled, four of us (Martha Aiken, Jeanie B. Smith, Lydia Jordan and myself) were ordered to the 217th. Some fun!

We had a cordial reception here at the 217th, especially after running into Bill Blodgett a few minutes after our arrival; he seemed genuinely glad to have us and escorted us triumphantly in to lunch. This place is not quite on the elegant lines of the "Palace" but our quarters are so much more comfortable; warm rooms, beds with sheets, only a step to the phone and showers, with hot water all the time. Imagine that! There is a drying room to dry laundry and a place to iron—if you have an iron. Looking out the huge windows, there is the entrance to the Metro below, a park opposite, and lights in windows of houses, blackout regulations seem lax here now. We are located right in the city so no passes are needed, we can browse around the shops to our heart's content and buy dainty things if we have the price. This place also is on the Evac system and we keep very busy. They have been very nice to us here but just the same Christmas is acoming and your children are becoming more and more apprehensive every day as orders to rejoin you fail to materialize. Tell Col. Crawford we each and every one love him dearly and want to come "home".

Earnestly;

Fishie.

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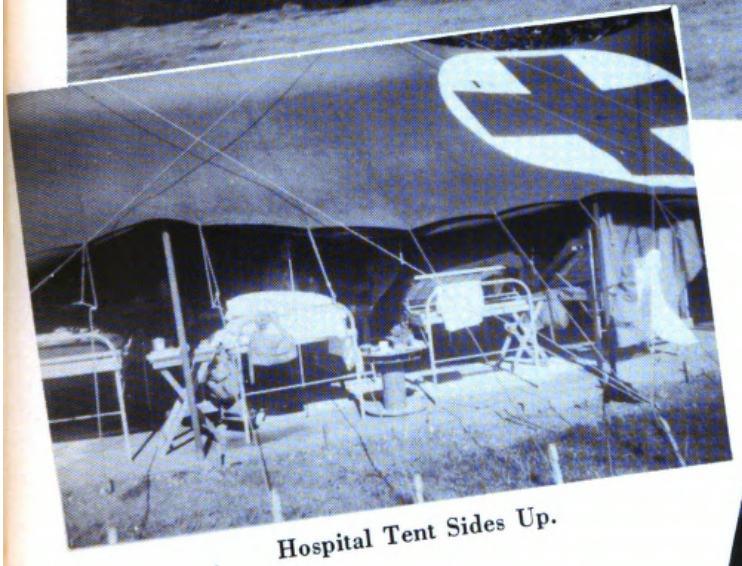
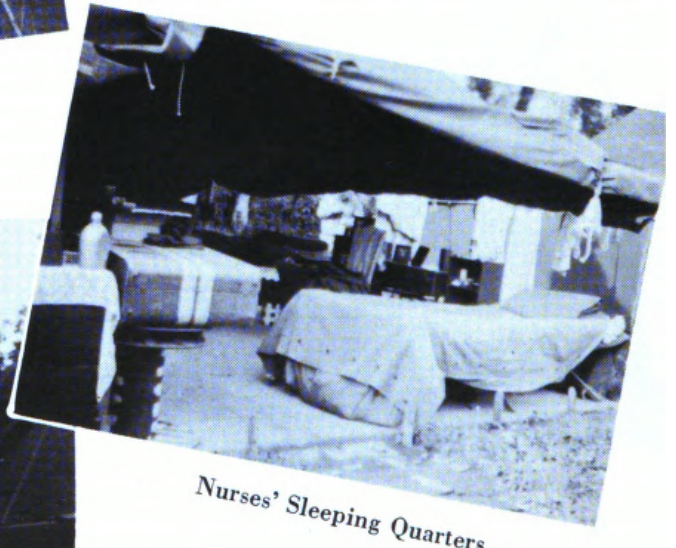
Barber, PX, Post Office.



Hospital Tent Sides Up.



Nurses' Sleeping Quarters.

Bulletin Board.

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Evacuation of a Patient to the States.

Enlisted Men Going on Duty.

Pyramidal Tents.

Lucky Gerry! Not Raining!

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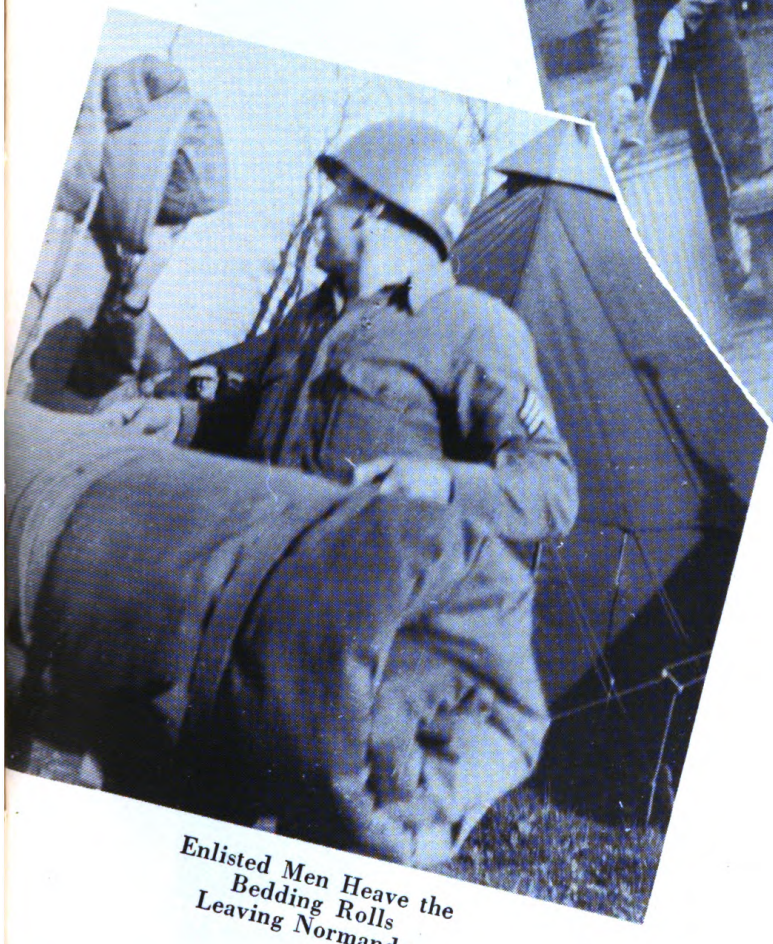
The Doctors Wash Their
Mess Gear.



Enlisted Men Heave the
Bedding Rolls
Leaving Normandy.

Pack 'em in!
Off They Go.
Leaving the Apple Orchard.

Muddy Exit.

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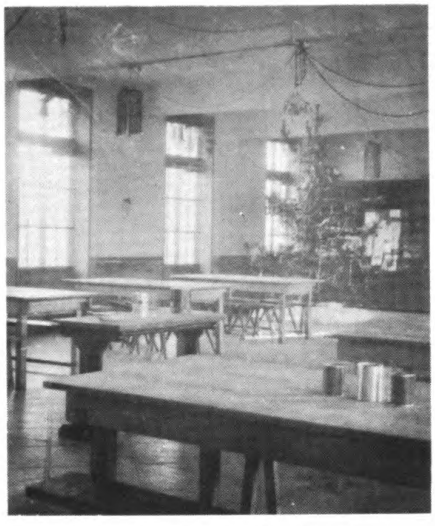
Third Class Leaving Paris
for Revigny.

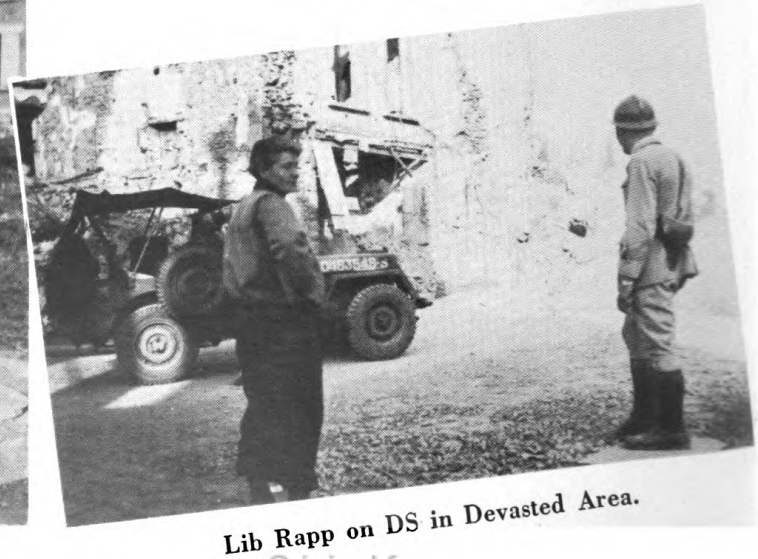
Gare de l'Est.



Bare Mess Hall Christmas
Revigny.

Entrance to Caserne
Andre Maginot.

Echo!



Lib Rapp on DS in Devasted Area.

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Dec. 9, 1944.

Dear Miss Peto;

Gee Pete, we miss you so much and all are so unhappy! If we cannot join you for Christmas we will be a mighty lonely bunch. It isn't so bad here, the 108th, especially after having talked to disgruntled nurses attached to other outfits. We always knew you were a good Chief Nurse but now we know how lucky we really were! It is nice not to be burdened with rules and regulations like a student until life feels like a jail. Some of the girls were talking about Chief Nurses one day; they told of one who was deeply rank-conscious and about her insistence on being saluted at all times. One day hurrying across the street in a bitter wind, closely wrapped in her cape, she was saluted smartly and made her come out of her warm folds—were they gleeful about it! I must say my Chief Nurse was nice to me for she gave me a whole day off when Herb got a forty-eight-hour combat leave; at first she said it wasn't fair as only thirty nurses have had a whole day off in four months but as this was unusual (a husband!) I could have it. I was so surprised I nearly fainted. Herb had his combat clothes on and the time just flew but it was wonderful to see him again. Several of the girls came to town that night and we met at the Casual Officers' Mess. He was so glad to see them and insisted on treating all to drinks, which worried some for they thought it was imposing. He just kept saying—"Oh, I've lots of money; buy anything you want." He sounded like a millionaire but he doesn't have much chance to spend where he is and he made this a real spree. He said to me, "I bet all the other officers wonder who I am that I have so many girls around!" He seemed nervous and jumpy at first but they have been bombed and strafed and are now in the buzz bomb area. Today Liz and Dave Habif came over; Dave had six bottles of champagne and was treating us all. He looks well and is at Rheims; if we join you at Christmas both Dave and Herb could come to see us—they say it is time we had another good old Churchill party. Liz couldn't get the day off and was having a fit when she learned I had one. Why are some Chief Nurses so mean? You treat us like adults and really you do not have too many problems with us, do you? I know there are always problem children. Aside from the Chief Nurse angle, we really do have a swell outfit in

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2nd General; I thought Col. Crawford was exaggerating when he said how good we were but now I think he was right. Even in the tents we gave superior medical and nursing care and our wardmen were so well-trained and willing.

It is very crowded here. There are cots lining the halls, the middle of the wards and every available floor space. Row after row of nice young infantry boys; they come in from the Evac hospitals dirty and unshaven and are so grateful to get cleaned up and into comfortable beds. The DS people dig in and clean them up and we have won the admiration of the wardmen who at first resented us. They seem so afraid of pampering the patients, even with a back rub, which, God knows, after all they have been through, they richly deserve if it adds to their comfort. They are evacuated from here fast, too. It must be lonely there at Revigny; Herb got there and saw Col. Crawford; he says it is a horrible place and nothing in the town but bombed buildings. Anyway, we love you more than ever and are glad you are so tolerant and understanding. Get us back for Christmas!

Sincerely yours;

Connie.

P. S. Constance Gough Bloom sounds too formal!

Dec. 15, 1944

Dear Pete;

This week there was a Chief Nurses' meeting from all the Army Sections with all having lunch here at the 108th; Lt. Col. Danielson present and everyone disappointed you couldn't get here. I did not see any of them either, as I was in bed with my typhus shot. All the girls were notified about the typhus shots and are getting them as per order. Your nephew, Bill Peto, was here Wednesday; stayed overnight with Bill Blodgett. Disappointed at not finding you with us but he was given your location and APO; he is in Louvain and being kept busy and had to go right back. Too bad you could not have seen him—he looks fine. I am jealous of Margaret and Trudy wangling their way back home to 2nd General; guess I just do not know the right people. Webbie is in Belgium living in the lap of

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luxury. Housed in a hotel, two nurses to a room, steam heat, electric lights, wash-basin in each room and the hospital right across the street in a school building. Everybody has enough money for now; no time given us to shop anyway, not even for Christmas cards. My P. M. today but all are restricted to the post, one of those AWOL-catching days! Oh to be back at 2nd General—our doctors were so interested in their patients. Any one of them can dress one patient six times a day and I won't say a word nor will any of the others! Pete, don't be ashamed of your unhappy and restless children; we are just anxious to get back with you.

Merry Christmas to all in 2nd General from DS, Paris 2nd General.

Love to you;

Gladys Swayze.

As Christmas, 1944, came, the 2nd General unit was not together; these messages came to the Chief Nurse written on one big card which she will always cherish.

A Merry Christmas to you, Pete; we wish we could celebrate and we all want to come home!

Dorothy Hagner.

Heaven knows, we miss our "Ma" and the whole family! Merry Christmas everybody!

Ruth D.

Merry Christmas! Don't let this happen to us next year!

Madeline.

Come and get us! Come and see us anyway!

Ginne Smith.

We love 2nd General—

Mac.

Merry Christmas; Happy New Year. We miss you all like mad.

Brownie.

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Honey chile, we shore wants to see you; miss you twice as much at this time.

Lou.

We aren't only lonely—we're aching to get back.

Patsy.

All I can say is—ditto—and then some!

Anne S.

We are convinced there was no place like 2nd General. Hope we will be back soon.

Alice L.

We drank a toast to you tonight; miss you very much and want to come home.

Emily S.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! We surely wish we were with you.

Betsy.

Guess you know how we feel now, Major, Matron, Margy, Ma'am! Merry Christmas.

Danny.

Greetings from the 365th. We want to come home.

Ditto Hastings
K. Edwards
E. M. Tembrock
Jan David.

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France — Revigny

THE second contingent of 2nd General Hospital moving out of Normandy was on the train one and a half days, enroute to Paris the menu consisting entirely of sandwiches made of bread and tinned corned beef. The Chief Nurse had declared that neither hell, high water nor Germans was going to separate her from the treasured gasoline stove; it was toted along and supplied the nurses with hot coffee until the coffee gave out. No other beverage was available except the bad French water. When St. Lazarre station was reached—everybody out. In the bitter cold. Field maintenance equipment, field ranges, cots, bedding rolls, suitcases and blankets plus hundreds of loaves of bread and tins of corned beef were piled on the platform. A proper mess the British would have called it. 2nd General had a name for it also! Most people remember that Paris has no central or union railroad station; a change of trains in peacetime involved a dizzy whirl across Paris in a taxi. In 1944, in the case of the outfit from Normandy, it meant hoof it to the Gare de l'Est, a matter perhaps of three miles straight through the heart of the city. Everyone stared at the mound of equipment and wondered how it was to be transported. An R.T.O. officer appeared and he was troubled by no wondering.

To the enlisted men he barked, "Pick up that stuff and get going!" To the girls he said, "You nurses have been trained to carry things; some day you'll learn to travel light. And you'll never get anything you leave behind, either," he added, guessing ahead.

"Get going!"

There was an argument but the R.T.O. officer won. Good old adrenal glands! Blood pressures went up as each angry nurse picked up as much gear as she thought a good horse usually carries and started off with it at a smart clip; the enlisted men followed staggering under their own cumbersome personal loads. The Detachment Commander, Capt. Anderson, was ordered to stay with the field maintenance equipment until further orders. The procession of humiliated people started across the city; pedestrians stared and some murmured—*"Ah, les pauvres refugees!"* The nurses in the group who, since the Liberation and indeed since their teens, had dreamed of

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visiting Paris, had certainly never imagined seeing it this way. Nor had the citizens of Paris, inured to strange sights, ever beheld a more surprising pageant. French girls called greetings to the men in the group, after all a man is a man; all the nurses got was one whistle and it came from a small man meekly pushing a perambulator!

When the Gare de l'Est was reached the nurses collapsed on the sidewalk and curb; so did the men as they gulped and gasped reproachfully—"Did you have to *run?*" It was found out later that buses were to have transported the nurses and the equipment; there were those who wanted to go back and "explain" things to the R.T.O. officer. Two nights without sleep, the burdened march in the extreme cold, and especially the diet of cold salt meat resulted in cases of gastric and intestinal disturbances; there were dilated stomachs, pain, temperatures and diarrhea. There were no orders at the station for the group and the situation became less funny as the hours passed. The Red Cross workers went scouting and found a newly opened A.R.C. building; as yet it had no organization but the medical group was taken off the street. The nurses rolled up in blankets and stretched out on the floors of the lounge and hall; the enlisted men lay on the floor of the canteen. A restaurant about to close for the day was found and the cook and helpers were persuaded to prepare and serve a hot meal—at ten francs each. More than half the group was too ill to eat it.

As night progressed and orders failed to materialize the Red Cross attendant in the building permitted the nurses to use the beds in the sleeping rooms which were ready for occupancy; there were no sheets or pillowcases, she explained, but that bothered no one! Pills were doled out to the ill and, after swallowing some herself, the Chief Nurse rolled up in her blanket at 3 A. M. At 6:30 came a summons:

"Train leaves in three minutes; how soon will the nurses be ready?"

"No breakfast?" inquired the Chief Nurse.

Apparently the question was very silly. But the Red Cross again came forward at the last moment with steaming coffee and dough-

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nuts. At Gare de l'Est the remainder of 2nd General which had come from Normandy on another train, plus the enlisted men from the 5th General (old friendly-enemy again!) joined those who had, perforce, spent the night in Paris. By the time the train was ready to start it was discovered that half the enlisted men from both outfits were missing! With no Detachment Commander to stop them from seeing Paris, those who were not entirely knocked out with stomach ache had taken to the cafes and night spots where, knowing their time was short, they went all out on a program of refreshment and entertainment. A detail, bolstered with a few M.P.s, started out on a round-up and someone must have known where to look, for the wandering sheep were escorted back, some dazed but still on their feet; others in unresisting heaps were given the old heave ho—one, two, three—wham! The train that was to have left in three minutes at 6:30 that morning actually pulled out at 11:30. Capt. Anderson, who had stuck faithfully to the equipment all night, was on board and looking disgusted. Someone bumped into him and exclaimed—

"Why Andy! Where have you been?"

"Me?" The Captain scowled, then grinned impishly; "I spent my first night in Paris with a piece of baggage!"

Nurses travelled in third class wagons on that train; the enlisted men rode in the 40's and 8's—the "40 homme and 8 chevaux". Bread and corned beef was distributed, so much to each car and each soldier carved his own slices. Once more the gasoline stove made hot coffee for the nurses, the supply having been replenished. The men had brought along with them some "hair of the dog" in the form of bottles of questionable cognac and apparently were being sustained and brought back to life by it. The trip across France was very slow, due, at least partly, to the strange custom French locomotive engineers have of stopping their trains whenever they feel like it, dismounting and going off to call at a nearby farmhouse, store or just disappearing into the landscape. It did not take this trainload of passengers long to get the idea and emulate the engineer; it was a leisurely and pleasant progress but tiring to the non-players. When the engineer hopped aboard again, he toot-tooted the whistle and uniforms came running from all directions, most of the men with

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bottles tucked tenderly under their arms and one man clasping a live hen to his chest. After several of these mad-hatter stops the train finally pulled into Revigny after mid-night. Col. Crawford was there to meet 2nd General. He remarked that he had not expected them so soon, marched them a mile to the caserne and said innocently that Spam sandwiches and coffee awaited them in the mess hall. Lots of hard-to-kills had the astounding fortitude to risk choking on more salt meat sandwiches.

Revigny, in an isolated spot, is distinguished only because it is the birthplace of Andre Maginot; the town is poor, there were about 2000 inhabitants and they were very glad to see the last of the Germans who had treated them badly. The people were friendly; little children stopped the American nurses on the streets in order to shake hands. All of the buildings in the caserne had suffered from bombings, windows were out and the quarters assigned to the nurses were just one degree better than living in tents. The day after arrival, 15 of the 23 nurses were sent out on DS, to field and evacuation hospitals. In the building which housed the Chief Nurse a pot-bellied stove in the bedroom was the only source of heat; newspapers stuffed into the shattered window frames did a poor job of keeping out the wind. For some inexplicable reason the toilet (an unusual luxury) was located on the front porch. Of course it was frozen throughout the winter months and pans of water were kept on the stove in readiness to defrost the plumbing and sometimes the unhappy patron. At least the sides did not blow in or out or away but there were times when the slit trench seemed simpler and nearly as private.

During the second week in December the sergeants in Personnel decided the Chief Nurse looked lonely and forlorn and spoke to her about a dog.

"No more dogs! I'm not going to have my heart broken all over again."

"But Miss Peto, Major;" protested Serg't Chavenson. "This pooch is small; he is cute; he will always be small."

Serg't Freeney with Irish guile added, "He looks exactly like Sooner—same color, same markings."

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That did it.

"Let's see him."

The puppy was two months old, resembled a miniature collie, had long silky hair, colored black and tan with white breast and marked so much like Sooner he was given the name of Echo. Sooner's Echo. Even the C.O. fell for the alert, merry eyes and the Unit had another mascot. Echo's mother, who probably lived on a manure pile in Revigny (a symbol of riches, at that), would be surprised to see her offspring now in his American home which he dearly loves and guards with passion. The pup started on his effete career immediately for he was given a champagne basket lined with straw for a bed and his favor was courted with chocolate, which the French love and so do their dogs.

By the middle of December the number of pleas—"Get us with you for Christmas!" overwhelmed the Chief Nurse; but the 12th Evacuation Hospital still occupied the buildings at Nancy where 2nd General ultimately was to function as a General Hospital. Meanwhile the eight remaining nurses in Revigny planned to entertain 85 children of the town at a Christmas party. The children in this part of France had pitifully little. One nurse wrote: "It is the first time in my life I have seen a child cry because life was too hard." Two small boys and a tiny girl daily picked over the discarded ashes at the building where the nurses lived and carried home what they found in buckets; scrapings from the mess hall were collected the same way. The children called Echo—"La petite chien" and sometimes cried as they stroked the little dog; no one ever found out what that was about.

Lt. Eileen Hogan, in three letters to her sister, tells of the plans for the Christmas party and what happened later:

Dear K----;

A childrens' party is underway and I am on a committee of two to trim the tree; we have to make our own decorations and all are taking a hand at cutting out angels, stringing red berries, slicing icicles and stars from tin cans and making snow of white paper. Then

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it turned out the kids were to have a "few candies each"; that sounds simple but there are 103 children. It is fun, especially if you know the Army. A poster must be made and posted, with the proper accompanying box, requesting candy. Before the poster can be made, permission must be obtained from the 1st Serg't's office. The permission is given, signed and put on the Bulletin Board. Poster is then put up. Then daily I make rounds and collect the candy; the enlisted men are all very generous to children. Each child is to get a chocolate bar, a small bag of mixed hard candies, one package of life savers and two sticks of gum. Before worrying about the candy the little bags are made from collected writing paper; then brown paper must be collected. Paper being so precious, it is like prying gold from people. Eventually it will be ready. In the meantime our room looks like nothing on earth; I have to go out and leave it once in a while! Col. Schullinger started the ball rolling for the party but now we hear he is going home. Major Sloan is to be Santa Claus. Julia Delafield's Christmas packages are piling up to the ceiling; she is probably very busy but we hope she is not in the way of the German paratroopers! Hitler promised us a surprise for Christmas—this is it. Also I hope her mother doesn't know which part of the country she is in just now. We hope to be settled in our new hospital soon. Liz Habif is back with us—the first to return; Dave was to have been here too but I guess he is jumping. Christmas Eve the party is for the men; Christmas Day is for the children. I may not be able to write again until it is over. I'm going to Communion all this week and I'll be thinking of you all at the mid-night Mass.

Love to you all;

Eileen.

Christmas Eve, France, 1944.

Dear K----;

All our plans for the Christmas parties have come to naught! We have gone military overnight and all fetes are off. German paratroopers wearing American uniforms, speaking English and carrying American identifications, are being rounded up by the French who really are shooting first and asking questions afterwards. We are

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ordered to keep out of town and off the roads. No word this week of Judy's team; field hospitals are so mobile they must be all right. Two of our own doctors being on the same team is a relief to our minds. The choir is having last practise, the strains of *Silent Night, Holy Night,* is backgrounded by the constant drone of airplanes overhead. At the last minute yesterday permission came through for Miss Peto to go to Paris; all the girls on DS in the different hospitals have been frantic for news, so she is going there before Christmas with their mail from home and many packages of good cheer rations. It will help them over the Yuletide season. It will be a hectic day for our Chief Nurse; I can just see her trying to get around Paris with all her bundles; there probably isn't another Chief Nurse in the Army who would do it. We all hope she doesn't cause too much of a stir—the Army isn't accustomed to having Majors act as mail clerks.

Later.

It was seven o'clock when I finished the above; it is 10 P. M. now. At the above point smoke started to pour out of every crack in my stove and for half an hour I tried every known device to stop it. Still the smoke came. So the fire was doused with water, all coal and ashes removed and a new fire started from scratch. Worse than ever—smoke just billowed out! This necessitated opening the window which meant all lights out. It is freezing outside and in no time at all we were freezing inside too. About this time a lone German plane passed overhead and suddenly let out a round of rat-a-tat-tats; guns started popping and it sounded like a Chicago gangster film around here. At this point I heaved a pail of water into the stove and decided to do a little sulking myself. However it was too cold. I turned on the lights and looked around; there was soot on everything, you couldn't even see this paper. I hauled out Judy's little stove, got it to go long enough to heat some water so at least we could go with clean faces for the mid-night Mass. The sad part is, Lt. Dorothy Robinson and I have just taken over these rooms and we have spent hours getting them cleaned up; Miss Peto goes around and gets everyone settled and never thinks of her own comfort, she is in a tiny 2 x 4 with another nurse when she should have an apartment to herself, but she would never ask for it. I've peeked in all my Christmas packages but have not really opened them. It is a clear, cold brisk

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night; carols will be sung at 11:30 and then Mass at mid-night. The childrens' tree looks lovely, it seems a shame they cannot come. But their presents are to be sent to the Mayor for distribution. The water system, including the Lister bags, is frozen solid. If this sounds as bad in the morning as it does now, it won't be mailed.

Eileen.

Christmas Day, 1944

Dear K----;

Mass wasn't over last night until 1:30 A.M. First there were carols with the choir singing the responses. Col. Schullinger was there with the carol singers; we all wished him a Merry Christmas and we all figured that in New York the carolers were just starting through the wards. I dreaded coming back to my icy room. When I opened my door the lights were on and a blast of heat met me; I thought I was in the wrong apartment. Miss Peto had come back safely from her Paris trip and had come to my room with a package from Santa; she saw the havoc and felt the cold and happened to remember something to do to a temperamental stove. She did it and lit the fire and when I got in there was a bed of lovely, glowing hot coals! Miss Peto does such nice, thoughtful things for the girls. Everything is quiet this A. M. and the radio says the German counter-attack is checked. The APO says there is a heavy mail today. I hope you have a nice Christmas too.

Eileen.

On December 23rd, four nurses were sent from Revigny to the new hospital at Nancy; Major Peto was seeing them off when Col. Crawford said to her—"You better hurry and get into Class A uniform if you want to go to Paris with me—I'm leaving in an hour."

The orders had come! The Chief Nurse had been trying for days to wangle a way to get to Paris to see how all of her 60 nurses on DS were getting along; permission to travel had been applied for but because of recent developments on the battlefront, with resulting

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"off limits" orders, hope had been abandoned. The C.O. was making the trip to HDQ at Paris on official business. An ambulance, and now a trailer loaded with Christmas packages and personal mail, was made ready and never was a Class A uniform hauled out of a bedding roll and made presentable faster! At 11 A. M., armed with A.G.O. cards, dog tags and other identifications, with Corporal Clark at the wheel, the Commanding Officer and the Chief Nurse headed west for Paris, which they reached at 3:30 P. M. The train had taken 13 hours to cover the same ground the ambulance traveled in four and a half; but then, Corporal Clark did not enjoy the train engineer's unique privilege of stopping when in the mood.

In Paris, driving toward *L'Arc de Triomphe,* the trees were bare and the weather icy. Passing the Eternal Light that burns in the center of the arch for the Unknown Soldier, the Chief Nurse recalled 1931 when she, as a special nurse, stood with a group of Gold Star mothers while the oldest mother placed a wreath on the grave; it seemed as if it never had happened. Now, in this 1944 December crisis, no Americans were allowed on the streets or in the stores but there were many Parisiennes doing last minute Christmas shopping; at every corner a gendarme stood with a tommy-gun under his cape. The French police stopped all civilian cars and the M.P.s stopped the military. When one asked what was in the trailer, the travellers from Revigny had the reckless impulse to say—"Boche" but it was controlled; no point in getting shot for a poor joke.

Heads of departments were visited. The one in charge of nurses could barely say "Hello" she was so excited; how had permission been obtained to travel? Why! General Patton himself was not supposed to be abroad! At the 108th General, Col. Rousselot showed the visitors around his hospital of which he was very proud. There was a dance that night but eleven 2nd General nurses on DS there elected to sit and talk with their Chief Nurse until 2 A. M. At 6:30 A. M. Major Peto started a brisk tour of the hospitals in the Medical Center of Paris, leaving presents and mail for all of her nurses. Everywhere the Chief Nurse and the Commanding Officer went, they were warmly greeted.

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Of this trip the Chief Nurse wrote:

It was a worth while trip, even the driver was glad we had come. At 2 P. M. Col. Crawford began worrying about getting back to Revigny before blackout but I couldn't tear myself away; the girls made me feel I was the nicest present they could have had. We left at 4:30 P. M. having seen all but ten nurses. We were stopped eight times coming into Paris, fourteen times coming out, and countless times en route. One M. P. said to Col. Crawford:

"Sorry sir; I have to write down everything about you."

"That will take time," sighed the C. O.

After a few minutes of scribbling the cautious M. P. inquired, "Sir; don't you have another serial number? This one has only four numbers!"

Col. Crawford said dryly; "No. I've been in the Army 28 years; General Pershing's number is A 16 and he is still living."

"Yes, sir!"

Obviously the youthful M. P. would rather have stopped a dangerous enemy than have affronted or even inconvenienced an American officer with such an impressive number and hoary background!

As we neared Revigny a German plane swooped low, passing directly over our ambulance and trailer; the Red Crosses probably kept the gunner from strafing us. It was the railroad, running beside the bivouac area, which was the intended target but the whole camp had come in for a peppering; there was a lot of excitement but fortunately no casualties. One of the doctors, Major Phinizy Calhoun, was in the railroad station at the time; he had been trying doggedly for one hour to get his fiancee, Lt. Mary Ellen Van Horn on DS in Paris, on the telephone. Also he had been trying doggedly for one month to get himself sent on DS to Paris in order to be near her. Now it was Christmas Eve and he wanted to talk to her. Under the circumstances it is extraordinary that contact was made; the first "hellos" had just been exchanged when Jerry let loose with the bullets. Major Calhoun automatically responded to two instincts; one,

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to seek safety by crawling into as small a space as possible and two, to hang onto his girl. Not until afterward did he realize he had torn the instrument from the wall and had it cuddled to him in the corner of the room. Mary Ellen said she heard the racket of the strafing coming over the wire. When rounds of the camp were made to check on damage, little Echo was found hiding under the leaves of a giant cabbage plant in what had once been a German vegetable plot.

Happy New Year to all;

Marjorie

After her trip and turbulent arrival the Chief Nurse was exhausted but still armed with presents, some of them her own, she sought the last six nurses left in camp; they stayed up all night talking and at dawn raided the kitchen for eggs and tomato juice. Echo was taken for a walk on Christmas morning but Bill Peto, who had sent word by the nurses whom he had met in Paris, that he would try to spend Christmas in Revigny, did not show up all day. It was not Christmas for members of Ground and Air Forces who were engaged in that desperate struggle to keep the Germans from once again spreading over French territory.

On December 26th, Major Peto with three other nurses was sent to Nancy where both the doctors and the nurses of 2nd General, who had been out on DS since Normandy, began to gather throughout the holiday week. Little or nothing could be done about setting up the Hospital for the 12th Evac had not yet moved from the premises, though their advance details had gone out some time before. The first contingent of nurses arriving from Paris rode sitting up two nights and a day; bridges had been blown up in the path of the train and emergency crossings had to be engineered before the train could proceed. They had been given two sandwiches and one can of C-rations each for the trip and upon arrival were a wilted and hungry group. When a protest was made to the officer in charge he said defensively, "Think of the man in the foxhole." With much sympathy and understanding for the man in the foxhole nurses got as tired of that sentence as honest housewives in the States when,

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struggling to get food for a family, they heard so many times the insult—"Don't you know there's a war on!"

The second and last contingent of nurses from DS arrived with plenty of food and hundreds of Christmas packages literally spilling fruit cakes and other eatables. It was a personal irony to Lt. Mary Ellen Van Horn that Major Calhoun had received the orders he had begged for and had departed for Paris the night before she arrived in Nancy!

People live through harrowing things and say—"I'll never laugh about that." Then in a day, a month, a year, it becomes a funny story. The nurses began to laugh about their "trek" through Paris; they laughed about icicles on the "john" seat; they lived through and laughed at their bombing and strafing. The German counter-attack in 1944, which may have been only a bad scare at home, meant to the doctors and nurses on the scene, more crippled and dead American men. The year of 1944 did not end in laughter.

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France — Nancy

A GENERAL HOSPITAL is a fixed installation, when it moves there is comparatively little to transfer but the personnel. Arriving at a new destination, entirely new equipment is drawn and a functioning hospital is set-up all over again. When moving into buildings, such as Churchill Hospital in Oxford and the buildings at Nancy, an inventory is taken; when moving out the inventory is checked and articles broken or missing are paid for by the U. S. Government. Evacuation Hospitals carry with them, whenever they move, everything necessary for them to function; when the 12th Evacuation finally vacated Nancy they moved in 60 trucks.

Nancy, once the capital of Lorraine, was one of the fortunate cities in war-raddled Europe to escape destruction; it is a city of beautiful trees and handsome stone buildings. There is the *Hotel de Ville,* the *Palais du Gouvernment,* the *Cathedrale,* the *Musee,* the *Theatre,* the *Grande Hotel* and the *Arc de Triomphe.* Some of these buildings face each other about a spacious quadrangle called *La Place Stanislas.* Within the square stands a statue heroic-size, to the benefactor of Lorraine. There are fountains of bronze in opposite corners and great gates of gracefully wrought iron form arched entrances to *La Place;* pendant lanterns of the same delicate grille work, topped with gilded crowns, diffused soft light before the war, and would again after V-E Day. Surrounding the city like a setting for a jewel is a panorama of mountains. The visitor readily sees why Nancy is called—"The little Paris." In and about the city were many casernes for, before World War II, Nancy was a military training center comparable to West Point. The buildings which comprised 2nd General Hospital in 1945 originally had been a French military hospital; the Germans after the occupation continued to operate it as a hospital; after capture of the territory by the U. S. Third Army, the 12th Evac used part of it for a time. Eventually it was to be returned to the French. Across the street from the entrance to 2nd General there was a Park; one of the fine structures in the grounds was a Botanical Museum containing nothing and there was speculation—had the enemy stripped it or had the French found time to hide its treasures? Another building purported to be the

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world's largest indoor swimming pool, really a spa, a hydrotherapy set-up. Also in the enclosures of the Park, French youths still assembled daily to drill. The city has trolley cars which made Brooklynites homesick; only workers might ride in them—everyone else walked.

The buildings of 2nd General were big and rambling, getting about was going to be hard on the legs and feet; though there were only two stories to the main building, the wards on the second floor were separated in such a way it was necessary to descend to the first floor to move from one ward to another on the second floor! There were showers, indoor toilet facilities, the water pressure was not too bad and neither were the cockroaches. The buildings that had taken care of 600 patients now had to be expanded to accommodate 1500. Partitions were knocked down, extra plumbing installed, the operating room enlarged and all walls painted. A great deal of the work was done between Jan. 1st and Jan. 15th, but alterations continued long after patients were admitted.

The nurses' living quarters, two separate buildings known officially as N 1 and N 2 (and off the record as the fronthouse and the backhouse), were the nicest since Oxford days in spite of dreary peculiarities. The Germans had placed a prisoner stockade parallel with N 2 and a pit latrine which had served it (still uncovered) ran under the windows. Either the French, the Germans or the 12th Evac, not knowing what else to do with the coal which furnished heat for the buildings, had it dumped on the ground before the main entrance to N 2; it was necessary, not only to pass an officers' latrine, but clamber over the coal to gain access to quarters. Another side of the building was bounded by the Morgue. That is what someone thought of nurses in this French military hospital. These things were changed as quickly as possible. Forgotten comforts were central heating, closets for clothes and real beds. Box springs, mattresses and even the iron bedsteads had been salvaged from the deep snow in which they had lain ever since the Germans had thrown them out of the windows before they left. They were dried and used. For trimming up rooms the nurses had to scrounge again; the needle-smart made bedspreads and curtains of burlap (the Germans had left bolts of it) and applied touches of red with material, which when used in orthodox

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manner, made bandages for orthopedic cases. There were three bathtubs in N 2, all on the first floor and all in one room without partitions; taking a bath was one happy family affair. The door to the nurses' quarters—which had been a dirty brown and had borne a sign, MACH DER TÜR ZU!— the Chief Nurse had ordered painted a bright, cheerful blue. It caused merriment when someone recalled an old peasant custom of painting a house door blue when Mama had marriageable daughters within.

By Jan. 1st, 1945, there were 41 nurses back from DS. Distressing news arrived that Capt. David Habif had been taken prisoner at Bastogne; his wife was not permitted to write home of the fact. Major Sloan was made Chief of Surgery to take Col. Schullinger's place; everyone was pleased with the appointment and most happy to work for him. The 826th Engineers, a unit which had been overseas six months longer than 2nd General, was in a nearby camp and invited the nurses to a New Year's Eve dance. They were a hardy lot and needed to be for at the time the outfit was living in pup tents pitched in the snow. They hired a room in a tavern on the bank of the Moselle River and sent G. I. trucks for their guests; there was a 9 o'clock curfew in Nancy but it applied to pedestrians, military vehicles were not stopped. It was a sparkling, moonlit NewYear's Eve and in an equally sparkling beverage the New Year's toast was offered: "Home this year!" Buzz bombs were headed toward England at this time but there was plenty of other air activity; at the beginning of one raid the nurses thought the noise emanated from the French plumbing which always gave off explosive groans, but they soon realized it was bombing. Bridges across the Rhine were being knocked down one minute only to be rebuilt by the U. S. Army engineers in the next. It was almost as quick as that. The 826th rebuilt a bridge in their sector one day and put up a sign: "This bridge was built in xxx minutes by the xxx engineers. TAKE OFF YOUR HAT!"

Living took on some degree of normalcy; the nurses were back in skirts and silk stockings, chilly, but no gripes. Combat suits replaced Class A in the bedding rolls and Jimmy Cuneo was once more working on the hair-dos. The Chief Nurse had a warm and clean room to herself in N 1; a french window opened into an enclosed

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garden which had an evergreen tree in the center, an arrangement practically made for Echo who chased rats, rabbits and birds impartially. Perhaps this is why he became known as the Revigny Retriever! Christmas packages continued to catch up with members of the unit. With Chanel No. 5 dabbed on one ear, Buraime Cuir de Russie on the other, and a dash of Houbigant's Chantilly on top of her head (the nurses had been able to buy perfume in Paris before they left) the Chief Nurse unwrapped the mystery thrillers and other books which had arrived "with love" from home and relaxed on her time off. There were attics and cellars in the hospital buildings; with the sanction of the C. O. and the help of a few stalwart G. I.s, red plush and needlepoint chairs, porcelain vases, a handsome carved chest and pictures were resurrected to lend ease and dignity to the nurses' lounge; Bokhara rugs were rescued and cleaned and used to brighten the C. O.'s office. Old friends dropped in. Doctors Bob Wylie and Sam Childs, who had been separated from 2nd General as far back as Camp Meade in order to become attached to the 23rd Station Hospital, were welcome guests. So was Dr. Fishwick. Friends from Oxford breezed in to say "Hello" and to exclaim about the Russian advances. One lone R.A.F. pilot, after completing a mission over Germany, had to bail out over Nancy and landed in 2nd General as a patient; it was so long since anyone had talked to a Briton, he was gabbed with like an old friend. Another flyer, making a call, said he had talked with Bill Peto four days ago; Bill was fine and planned to visit Nancy very soon. This news cheered the Chief Nurse.

January 19th was marked by a blizzard which buried the countryside under two feet of snow; the day was marked also by the arrival of the first hospital train from the front. It was bitterly cold; with morphine and plasma freezing, all wondered how the front-line medics could work. The wounded were optimistic; the "Krauts" (Infantry for Germans) were licked, the Russians were "going strong" and it "wouldn't be long now!" They were grim about losing their pals but few wasted time feeling sorry for themselves; they called losing an arm or leg a "million-dollar wound" because it would get them home. Those without limbs would still be able to make a place for themselves in society; their gravest

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worry, when married, was how "the wife" was going to take it. Many wounded who had lost most of their clothing still managed to cling to a picture of sweetheart, wife or child. From a surgical standpoint there were more serious operations than amputations. A shell from an 88 had hit one patient in the nose taking it off; it had lodged in his jaw which it fractured taking the upper lip off also. Three days after the operation the doctor doing the dressing asked the patient if he wanted the shell or should it be thrown away? The patient wanted the shell. Plastic surgery would build a new nose. Another patient had a hand grenade thrown in his face; he lost both eyes, the metal lodging against the brain, in fact, the brain could be seen when dressings were made. Nothing but youth and a great will to live survives such shocks. A sniper's bullet severed the spinal cord of one patient who will be paralyzed for life; he wanted to know how soon he would be able to raid his mother's ice-box! An infantryman was admitted with a fractured skull. His lieutenant came to see him and told the nurses the injured man in civilian life had been a bodyguard to Al Capone; he had been a good soldier. One patient sent his Purple Heart home to his wife and she wrote back that it was beautiful, she hoped he would get more like it. The wounded who could joke delighted in trying to shock the nurses with tales of gore, being very casual about it. Lt. Dorothy Hagner didn't have a bread knife one day when one was needed and a patient said—"Here nurse, use my knife." After the bread was cut he looked admiringly at his blade.

"Good little ole damn knife! Last time it was used, I carved a German with it!"

Artillery flattens a town in one hour—if the town puts up resistance. Many towns were flattened. Even when a town had surrendered snipers did great damage until an Army order stipulating that Germans found with weapons would be shot put an end to it. As hospital trains with 100 to 200 patients began to arrive every day, the wards were holding 74 beds, 3 rows, 8 inches apart. Nearly all the casualities were bed patients requiring x-ray, operations, dressings. Ordinarily the wounded stay in a General Hospital 60 days but as the casualties from the "push" across the Rhine increased, many patients remained only a week before being moved on. Faces

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lighted up when the destination was "home". From a professional standpoint the nurses were doing the most satisfactory work of their enlistment; the wounded were in need of expert handling and tender nursing care and the nurses of 2nd General were happiest when the demands on their skill was greatest; morale was way up. This was what they had enlisted for.

Many of 2nd General's enlisted men and some of the younger doctors in response to a call for men voluntarily left the medical service to join frontline fighting units. French civilians were hired. 35 women were trained by the Chief Nurse to serve as nurses' aids and there were 10 laboratory workers and 24 kitchen police. A torrential flow of language and a clatter of wooden shoes filled the wards and stairways. Sabots are lined with straw or worn with woolen slippers but nothing mutes the noise they make. The aids were a help in serving trays, carrying bath water, taking temperatures and helping to make beds. The patients tried to converse with the girls in weird French, gave up, said "Oh hell" and continued in English; it worked just as well for the girls answered "Oui, oui!" to everything anyway. To save time and facilitate work an interpreter was employed, for there was not only a different tongue but a different psychology with which to cope. Mr. Henry, a Frenchman himself, could not see why the French nurses' aids rated admonishment or dismissal for loose behavior with the patients.

"Oh I see," he finally thought he saw; "you object to playfulness when they are on duty?"

In February the Chief Nurse wrote home:

Bill called up on the 2nd. "Margie? This is Bill." He had flown to Toul and was awaiting the 8 A. M. courier; at 9 A. M. he was here. It was wonderful to see him alive and well; he is a captain now and has the D.F.C., the Air Medal and 17 Oak Leaf Clusters. Over coffee we gabbed; I told him about our strafing party in Revigny on Christmas Eve and he told about the breakthrough in Belgium. His squadron, briefed to fly Christmas Day, had on Christmas Eve, pooled the contents of their Yuletide packages; when spread on a table the flyers were appalled to find about five fruit cakes to

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each man! I laughed because the nurses had been asking each other as holiday mail was opened,—"Did the U. S. A. have a sale of fruit cake?" The cakes were delicious but it is heavy going for even the young and the very hungry. The Heinies (Air Force for Germans) captured Allied positions, equipment, and all the Americans' mail to boot; there existed a situation of near-panic. The flyers had so much to do that Christmas Day their worry was not over digestive tracts. Bill told how, flying low, they came over some SS troops by surprise—surprise all around. "Boy, we certainly scattered them! I bet we got 99% of them!" He seemed still mad at the Germans because they made him miss his Christmas dinner. He is confident he will be going home this March, that will be in time for all of you to be together for Easter. I wish I could go with him. Just think; when I left, Bill had not even entered training and look what he has been through since! It brings home to me how long we have been over here. Apparently there is now no idea of sending nurses home for the once-proposed 30-day leave and as all my nurses are eligible under the plan, it is just as well; I would have to put names in a hat and close my eyes tightly. Bill visited with the nurses he met in Paris and there were two dances while he was here; he got an extra day because of bad weather and we went into Nancy, saw the city and took pictures of each other. When he called the airfield this morning he was told he could take off. I kissed him goodby and away he went; I knew I would not see him again until we meet at home. But I *heard* him! There are no Thunderbolts around here but one just buzzed N 1 until I thought it must be lifting the tiles from the roof. Pilots must be very sure of themselves or else very young and a little crazy.

Well, back to the factory!

Marjorie

There was an order issued that required servicemen to be called "men" not "boys". Calling them boys was never any reflection on their fighting abilities; it was because of their youth and youthful antics that many of them were just "kids" to the nurses. Lt. Julia Delafield was night nurse on F 1, 2, 3, 4,—2nd General's one build-

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ing with four floors (no elevators); on floors 3 and 4 were placed ambulatory patients with the type of injuries that required attention but did not necessarily confine to bed. Most of the patients were very young and very bored and they resorted to old High School hazing tricks to pass the time and bring confusion and embarrassment upon each other. If a guy got mad he was "it" more than once. One night the bucket-of-water-on-top-of-a-door trick struck them as a honey of a prank to play on a ward pal who found it necessary to get up at least once in the night to traipse down the hall to the lavatory. It took some trouble to get everything rigged up properly in the few minutes the poor dupe was absent but willing hands and no hearts found a way. The mechanism worked beyond their wildest hopes. The door opened, the fire-bucket tipped, the avalanche of cold water drenched the victim who let out an utterly satisfying scream. Then there was horrified silence. It was the night nurse who stood dripping before them. Listening to a report of the incident afterward, the Chief Nurse asked,—"What did you do?"

Lt. Delafield said, "What could I do? I guess I just stood there and laughed."

For several days almost sanctimonious behavior reigned on F 3 and 4.

February 15th marked 2nd General's third anniversary in the Army. A dance in the best Oxford tradition was given; all the 23rd Station Hospital doctors from Dijon attended. Col. Crawford announced a service stripe for each six months overseas was to be worn on left sleeves and three stars for three major battles were to be worn on theater ribbons. There was a 10% raise in pay for the three years overseas service. No mention of home sweet home.

On February 22nd, the 3rd Division was decorated in public ceremonies in Nancy for its military achievements; French and American generals were much in evidence and the Star Spangled Banner and the Marseillaise crowded each other on the air waves.

Nancy became a rest center for frontline troops; men on leave wanted diversion and company but the nurses received so many invitations to dances it became a physical impossibility to keep up

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the pace though a valiant effort was made. Recreational facilities for the patients of 2nd General were the best the hospital ever had been able to give; there were many radios, and movies could be shown to 60 bed patients at a time. Eventually there was a horseshoe-pitching stand, a Red Cross building with a workshop, reading material, ping-pong table and a piano. Travelling entertainment came to the hospital. One man had a lovable and intelligent donkey; his master asked if he wanted to kiss the nurses and the animal nodded, yes. He was told to pick his favorite and he went right up to one nurse and daintily nuzzled her cheek. A magician took eggs out of his own and out of patients' mouths; it would have been a bigger trick if he had put eggs into their mouths! Food for the personnel of the hospital was poor though it was possible for a long time to relieve the monotony of dehydrated potatoes, carrots and cabbage with delicacies from the Christmas packages. There was no such thing as a grocer, a butcher or a baker in Nancy; citizens queued up to buy in a general market whatever came in, no pick or choose or bargaining, which must have broken the French heart. Nor was there a can of anything to be had. People were not thin but many were troubled with skin eruptions.

Rats were everywhere; there must have been more of them in Revigny and Nancy than anywhere else in the world. The ancient buildings and the long, tunneled cellars harbored them; big as cats they darted about the courtyards of the hospital buildings and scared nurses to death. Lt. Louisa Kent, about to go on a period of night duty, spoke to Lt. Ella Kauffman who was coming off.

"Are there any rats at night on D 1?"

"Oh yes," replied Ella; "they come in the kitchen. One night I went to get something to eat; you know how our loaves of bread are—a yard long? Well, there was a big rat with one end of our last loaf of bread in his mouth dragging it across the floor."

"Heavens!" gasped Louisa. "What did you do?"

"I wanted the bread too," declared intrepid Ella, "so we had a tug of war, I pulled one end and the rat pulled the other."

Louisa was weak by this time—"W - what happened?"

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"The rat gave up."

Lt. Kent lost no time in rounding up some G. I.s and directing that the holes be cemented.

"Won't do no good, lieutenant; they'll eat through it."

"Maybe; but by that time I'll be off night duty, God willing."

March letters grew lyrical with the beauty of Alsace-Lorraine in spring and the delightful weather; the porcelain vases in the lounges were filled with cherry blossoms. When apple blossoms replaced them 2nd General wondered a little if the Normandy orchards were lovely but no one had the urge to go back and see—enough is enough of an orchard. The climate was so much like that of New York in springtime, there was a new wave of homesickness. Letters also inquired of the home folk how they were doing with the pronunciation of the town of Bitche recently so prominent in the news. Snow had given way to mud which was no respector of persons on any front; on March 10th General Patch came to 2nd General to visit an injured nephew and the glitter of his military entourage was much bedimmed with splattered mire. POWs in sullen groups, used for outside detail, were filling foxholes and the rat-infested shelter ditches which had dotted and lined the lawns and grounds of the hospital. This was a good thing for someone was always falling into them. Ask Echo. He disappeared one day before the eyes of his mistress and with difficulty was fished out of the water which lay in the bottom of a six-foot-deep-hole. Lt. Laura Smith lowered herself head first into the hole and grabbed the pup while the Chief Nurse sat on her legs; this was only part of the rescue trick, none of the participants seem quite coherent about the rest of it.

With the improvement of the grounds, gardens were started with flower and vegetable seeds brought from England and sent from the States. Gentle rains promised to care for them. Monseiur and Madame Corbin owned the estate bordering one side of 2nd General Hospital grounds; even though it suffered from war-time neglect it was a beautiful place. The park had bridges over an artificial stream, statues, blossoming fruit trees, rose arbors, hot houses, even a child's playhouse in which an adult barely could stand. There were lily

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pools and fountains and a rocky pile which had been a lions' den. Before the war Madame had a love for lion cubs. The estate was enclosed within a wall over which it is safe to say no soldier-patient from the French Military Hospital ever went AWOL. The nurses and other officers of 2nd General were given a key to the door in the wall and were permitted to walk in the park and take pictures.

Injuries sustained by patients who had gone through the mine fields of the Siegfried Line were bad; hospital trains arriving daily kept the census of 2nd General throughout March at approximately 1000. Patients were being flown to the States in 48 hours with priority to amputees and bad burn cases. First to be freed from the horrors of the German concentration camps was a trainload of Polish prisoners; they were put in one hospital building in Nancy and it was expected that 75% of them would die of tuberculosis.

As Easter approached, the stores in Nancy showed more merchandise; toys which had not been there for the children at Christmas were being offered for Easter. Long-delayed mail, probably held up because of the Rhine crossing, poured in. A fruit cake was received with Christmas labels; it had been directed to the 2nd Field Hospital. Someone had written on the outside—"Try 2nd General. Good luck, baby. Joe Blake." Well, good luck to you too, Joe. Three hundred yards of flower-printed cotton material arrived from a friend in New York City; the nurses immediately started making dresses for the poor children of the locality. Of the employees in the Hospital, Mmes. Pettijohn, Moutand, Charton and Dancourt of the housekeeping department, each had nine to twelve children; the hospital painter had only five. Asked to paint a table the latter looked at the candy collected for Easter gifts and said, "*J'ai cinq enfants*". The table was painted and paid for with candy, cigarettes and cotton yardage. On Easter Sunday 1945, Notre Dame in Paris was packed to the doors with Americans. So were the churches in Nancy; the holiday was celebrated with thankfulness and a noticable lift in spirits. In the Easter parade women wore astonishing new bonnets fashioned with great high crowns and trimmed with what had been around the house, or God-knows-what! The amazing headgear had style or perhaps it was the way the women wore it. A nurse who had lived three years under a helmet wouldn't know. It

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was fun to see hats again; in England no one wore a hat but Queen Mary or Queen Elizabeth. French feet were still encased in wooden shoes—there was no leather.

By April there was a let-up in the number of hospital trains and the injuries seemed less severe. Rumors began to fly. The French help said the French Underground said—Hitler had taken poison. Col. Crawford said with Himmler's car and half the art treasures in Germany captured—the enemy must be on the run. Two hospitals in the Nancy Hospital Center were informed their next destination would be the China-Burma-India theater. 2nd General went around with its fingers crossed. In the middle of April the Chief Nurse celebrated another birthday away from home. One of the things that helped to cheer her was a letter:

Cpl. F. Adkins 904925
Guardroom I PTS
R.A.F. Station Ringway
Northenden, Manchester.

Dear Sir:

This is the first opportunity I have had of writing you in regards to your dog "Sooner" who is now in my charge. As you are aware, Sir, Sooner is being employed on Guard Duties and patrol work and is in my opinion an excellent dog in all respects. He is being well cared for, well fed, and has a large kennel and compound in which to roam about freely when he has finished his patrol duties. His condition is perfect and I will keep you informed how he is progressing. He causes quite a commotion when he knows he is to be brushed and always runs around the kennel with the brush in his mouth. I must say, Sir, he certainly is full of life. I hope these few lines, sir, will give you an idea how your dog is being well cared for under our care. So will now close until I write you again, sir.

Yours sincerely;

F. Adkins
R. A. F. Police

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Sooner's successor, Echo, had grown, but was a little dog full of gaiety and prance; he gave his mistress pink and blue forget-me-nots, pansies, geraniums and bachelor buttons for her birthday and when they were planted in her garden, to make sure of their growth, he pulled the plants up every once in a while to give them a good shaking. There was a party with champagne in celebration of the birthday.

Sad news came through the next day; the papers and radio announced the death of Franklin D. Roosevelt, President of the United States. The news did not cause great surprise for the President had looked extremely ill in all the last pictures of him shown in local papers and news reels; regret was expressed that the Commander-in-Chief could not have lived to see the end of hostilities in the ETO which everyone felt was so near. Work went on as usual.

By the last of April, Russia was in Berlin but few at 2nd General could find the heart to rejoice properly; a hospital train had come in carrying over 100 patients, most of them, RAMP (Recovered Allied Military Personnel). The condition of prisoners just liberated from German concentration camps was so shocking and their tales of suffering so harrowing, it made listeners ill. Hospital personnel was cut 10% in its food rations so these victims of malnutrition and abuse could have extra nourishment. Beside Americans and English there were Frenchmen, Poles, Russians, Hungarians, Czecho-slovakians—the wards rang with a clamor of harsh consonants and verbal gymnastics; every language and dialect spoken in Central Europe cascaded about the ears of Lt. Virginia Smith one morning as she went on duty; her commands in English and those of the ward man were futile in quelling the linguistic hullabaloo. One American infantryman on the bed nearest to the head nurse beckoned to her.

"Try some pig Latin on 'em, nurse," he suggested.

Lt. Smith recalled that a few years ago she had quite a command of the language children and adolescents affected to amuse themselves and annoy teachers and parents; taking a deep breath she sounded off with a stentorian command. The result was instantaneous. The jabber ceased while wondering and rather admiring eyes were turned her way; here was a woman who spoke a language to

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command respect! The routine work of the ward went forward with some show of cooperation and discipline. The American winked at her as she passed him.

May 4th was another sad day for 2nd General. Col. Crawford was ordered to assume command of a new group of hospitals just arrived from the States; they formed a Hospital Center stationed at the time in Bar-le-Duc. He was told at 10 A. M. one day and was gone by noon of the next. Being a Regular Army man he was philosophical about orders but having been with 2nd General from its activation both he and all members of the organization had hoped he would remain to see them safely home. The nurses felt they had lost a friend. Bar-le-Duc was only two hours away by command car and it was possible they would see him again. The new assignment would take him into either Germany or the CBI.

Then it happened! VICTORY! At last! May 8th, 1945. At first no one was excited, then when it seemed the news was authentic, the French started the ball rolling and the celebration gathered momentum fast. Church bells rang continuously while *La Place Stanislas* became jammed with a milling, shouting throng. Flags were hung and lights were strung on buildings and across streets. Gun-happy soldiers went berserk and there was a lot of irresponsible shooting which straightened a few of them out. It is remarkable how many people get fatally hurt celebrating happy occasions. One soldier having turned in his own gun as per orders, had successfully hidden a Lüger souvenir; while demonstrating to his audience how it worked he shot off his own leg! Had this happened just one day before he would have been subject to the processing through which every serviceman is put to determine a self-inflicted wound, with a good chance of being found guilty. But there was deep and genuine feeling too. An American Army band played the Allied national anthems over and over and tears flowed, not only from listeners eyes but from the eyes of the musicians also. At the Hospital some of the enlisted men tore down their bulletin board with all its written "You will" and "You won't" directions, burned it in their stove, then threw the ashes and the stove out the window. Patients threw away their crutches as though V-E Day was a miracle cure and went into town, some on each other's backs. One nurse reported that only two

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patients remained on her ward; both were in complete body casts and couldn't move. One ward of 87 patients had champagne for all —brought in to them by the French employees. In the evening, all lights blazing,—NO MORE BLACKOUT. To people who had lived at one end of a pencil-flashlight for more than three years, it was a most dramatic change. Hundreds of little children in Nancy skipped and danced in LIGHT—something they had never seen at night except behind a curtain in a room. Adults admitted they still felt the prompting to seek shadows, show no lights, hide from the menace in the sky. Freedom from Fear—it was difficult to believe. From 2nd General that night four nurses with an officer went into the city; while trying to cross *La Place Stanislas* they joined hands to keep from being separated and to their amazement found they were leaders of a snake dance. Catching the spirit they wove dizzily in and out and around buildings and screaming human beings until exhausted. An American paratrooper had climbed onto the head of A. Stanislas, benefactor of Lorraine, and from this perch directed the carnival with inebriate solemnity. A Fortress flew over the square and the dancing crowds, missing the *Hotel de Ville* by a foot (a Fort takes up a lot of room) ; the party from 2nd General had seen the pilots of the big planes do this daring buzzing stunt over Churchill in Oxford but the merry-makers of V-E Day were startled into momentary inaction and alarm. There were those sober enough to pray the pilot was not drunk. Col. Crawford was called up and urged to come see 2nd General all lighted up like a Christmas tree. Red, white and blue electric lights outlined the hospital buildings while a huge Free French cross of tri-colored lights blazed on the front of the main building. The former C. O. promised to visit 2nd General the next Saturday night to help it commemorate peace in a Victory dance.

All 300 French employees showed their jubilation by taking two weeks leave without the customary *s'il vous plait.* When the first hospital train pulled in V-E Day plus one, it was wondered if enough litter-bearers could be mustered to get the wounded into the wards. The French citizens in Nancy put on a show for the American servicemen; it was called "OOH LA LA!" and all that can be said of it here is: The French idea of entertainment is very different from the British idea.

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The Victory dance was given also as a Farewell party to Col. Crawford and to help make it reminiscently gay the nurses defiantly appeared in evening dresses. It took doing. Some of the finery had lived 12 months in foot-locker storage and looked it; a few new frocks were made of some of the cotton goods sent from New York. Window curtains were taken down and converted into gowns while one nurse dyed a bed sheet a pretty pale green and draped a sari-effect creation about her figure. Nice. Shame to America if French women had all the skill and artistry with wearing apparel!

Just in case anyone began to think—"this is the end of war, the end of 2nd General, the end of my rope,"—signs were pasted over all the many maps of the European Theater. FINI! KAPUT! Then huge red arrows pointed to other maps of the Pacific Front and new signs read: LEST YE FORGET. CBI.

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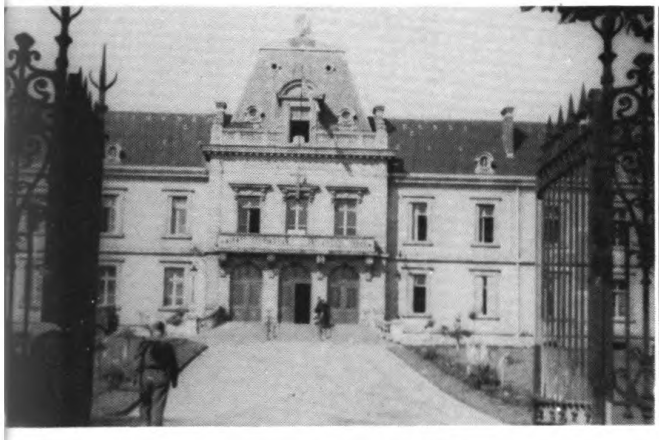

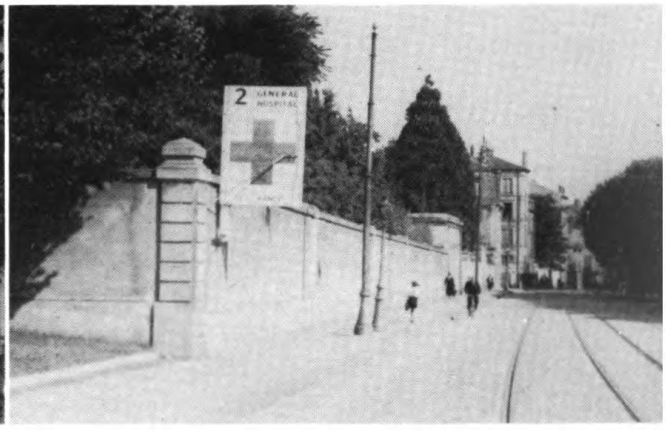

French Military Hospital in Nancy Becomes 2nd General.

78-Bed Ward.

The Germans Threw the Beds Out in the Snow.

By Plane.

By Ambulance.

EVACUATION OF PATIENTS

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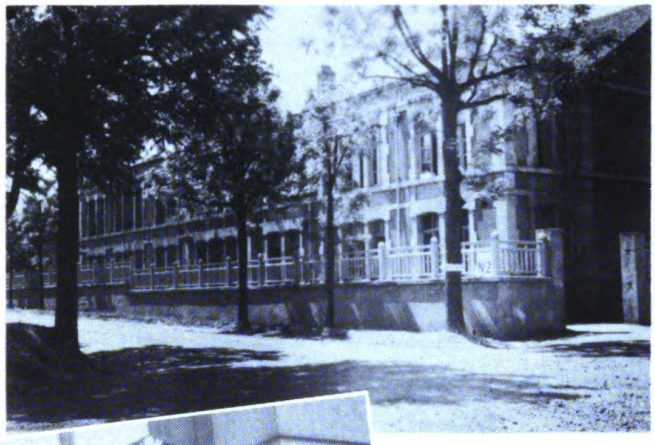
N 1

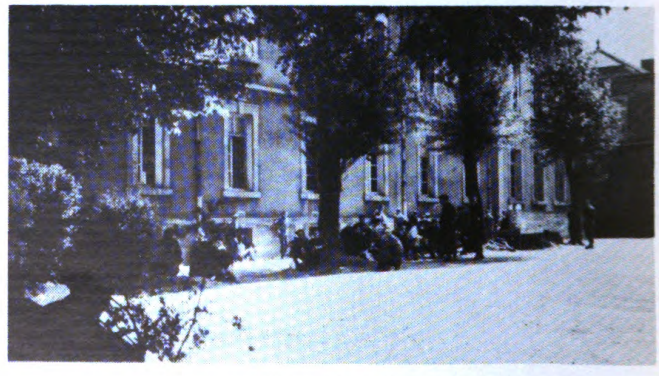
Skippy Reeves Reads the Signs.



N 2

Back of N 2 Nurses Take Sun Bath.

Bill Peto Visits in Nancy.



Patients Take the Sunshine.

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"My Name is Sooner. On His Majesty's Service."

The Forts Go Out.

Christensen Sounds "Imminent Danger"

Jerry Plane Down.

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Victory! Headlines in Stars and Stripes.

Wedding in Nancy.

La Place Stanislas.

Bronze Fountain in Stanislas Square.

Off to the CBI.

Fini! Kaput!

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France — Marseilles

THE $64. question at 2nd General after V-E Day: When are we going home? At the last ANC meeting, Lt. Col. Damielson had stated that no nurse with seventy or over points would be sent to the China-Burma-India theater. Hospitals going home for demobilization would remain in their present theaters six months. A circular on the bulletin board announced that anyone in the service with three battle stars and a child under eighteen, and who had been in the Army forty-eight months with twelve of them overseas, could apply to go home. In lieu of a child five stars made the applicant eligible. Someone to be funny put up another sign which said classes in Japanese and Chinese would start immediately for all members of the medical group; a few tired nurses took it seriously and tears flowed copiously. A bona fide order came to the Chief Nurse; she was to teach English to French civilians. The only person who obtained priority to go home at this time was Lt. Gertrude Martin; her father (80 years old) and her mother had recently been released from a Japanese prison camp and she was to go home to take care of them.

Thousands of planes still were thundering over Nancy only now they were headed west; long convoys of vehicles coming from Germany and directed toward ports of embarkation, flew banners and streamers telling of feats in the war and blazoning the next destination for their outfits. Dogs of all kinds were riding confidently in the jeeps. The mistress of the Revigny retriever, determined to take him home, began to worry over ways and means. Regulations said no dogs could be taken to the U. S. A.; the *Stars and Stripes* said — "use your Yankee ingenuity".

Toward the end of May the weather became very hot and the nurses' uniforms were giving out. Nurses on leave in Paris reported the Paris PX had uniform dresses for WACS in all sizes but none in any size for nurses; since arriving in France only size ten stockings could be bought and then only with a ration card, one pair per nurse every two months. At this period rest leaves were given. Nice was made a Rest Center for enlisted personnel; Cannes for officers.

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There were a few single-track minds in the Unit that held out for Jones Beach! Nurses who went to Cannes sat up for a day and a half on the train which served no food; during their stay it was compulsory for them to eat in the G. I. mess but they loved the resort even if conditions were not exactly gala. There were a few lively night spots open and it was in one of these they were introduced to the new drink—a blood-and-guts cocktail! It may have been named to honor a General or just to show how tough every wearer of khaki thought he was. For the uninitiated or the experimental the main ingredients of the drink are tomato juice and cognac. The beaches at Cannes were being cleared of mines but frequently one floated in from the sea and caused tragedy; one nurse from the 127th General stepped on one and was gravely injured.

Back at 2nd General a notice was posted making the Moselle River "off limits" for swimming because of pollution of the water; the enlisted men, among whom were some professional ballplayers, gave up swimming and continued to play baseball in their time off; they had won the championship of the Southern Base in England and proceeded now to try for the championship of Lorraine. Trips to the Vosges Mountains with swims in lovely Lake Giradmer were more successful though the trip to and from had to be via Army truck; Echo went along on the lake picnics but took a dim view of both swimming and riding, the first scaring him and the latter making him sick. How was he to get to America? Though not strategically situated, the Germans when they left Giradmer wantonly burned the picturesque little town; now only gutted houses dotted the shores of the lake. Nurses on rest leaves in Luxembourg found it untouched by war except for high prices; luxuries like eggs, butter and ice cream were obtainable and the exquisite laces for which the region is famous could be purchased if one had the price and the stamina to queue up an hour to exchange French francs for Belgian francs. Many Americans on leave over Memorial Day visited the American cemeteries at Verdun and St. Michiel (World War I) which had not suffered destruction and indeed were most beautiful—if there are any hearts at home troubled over that, they can be comforted.

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The 23rd Station Hospital at Dijon closed. As hospitals in the Nancy Hospital Center closed, their patients were sent to 2nd General; patients from field and evacuation hospitals in Germany arrived by plane. In one day the census at 2nd General rose to 1500. Formal inspections were resumed bringing forth all the old familiar groans and gripes reminiscent of Oxford trials. The war had not divorced inspecting officers from their idiosyncrasies; one was most particular. It was required of each nurse making a report to end her statement by saying: "This is the limit of my responsibility". The nurses loved that one! It was disconcerting to hear a reporting nurse say in sharp, clear tones—"This is the limit!" Pause. Then as necks reddened they finished the sentence innocently but just in the nick of time. As wounded poured into the wards it was not only the nurses who gave voice to the new gripe; the whole hospital was growling and muttering—"At this rate, we will be here for the next war."

Since Col. Crawford had left, Lt. Colonel P. Putnam Lloyd had been acting C. O.; on May 31, Col. Rousselot left the 108th General Hospital in Paris to become Commanding Officer of 2nd General. Lts. Madeline Young, Elizabeth Fisher, Ruth Owen, Julia Delafield and Eileen Hogan enlisted for duty in the CBI, in spite of Col. Crawford's warning before he left that CBI did not mean Come Back Immediately. On June 5, they left to join the 237th General Hospital scheduled to go out at once. As a matter of record it did not go for two and a half more months and the vessel bearing the five nurses was on the Atlantic when news of the Japanese surrender, August 14, came over the ship's radio. The captain proceeded to a U. S. port and the girls who had been kissed goodby "for a long, long time and take care of yourself" reached home before the friends they had left in Nancy!

On June 11, twenty happy enlisted men, each with over 107 points, departed for home; the rest of the hospital personnel was to hear by July what would become of them. While struggling with the French-English classes the Chief Nurse was further bewildered at receiving another order which required her to report to the Paris Study Center for a course in French History at the Sorbonne beginning July 1.

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From the Sorbonne in July the Chief Nurse wrote:

This is better than the seaside! Do not yet know why I am here except that at the end if I am smart I will receive a diploma in French civilization. Sorry I pouted for I am enjoying it immensely and the time is going all too fast. Have a room to myself, a comfortable bed, a bookshelf with books, and no "Hut, two, three, four —count it off, count it off!" under the window. The lectures are delightful, some in French, most in English; the instructors are interesting and affable. They fling the Louies (plural for Louis) about, the way the English tossed Henrys into the conversation, but I struggle. In the mornings the class learns about Paris before 1789; afternoons are given over to supervised tours mostly through places not generally available to tourists. Today we go to the Latin Quarter and La Cite. As the Germans took all the taxis and buses, the Metro is jammed but that makes it just like New York. Last night I saw the Lunts in "Love in Idleness"; that was on my own and extra curricular also was a fling at the Grand Prix. Another day, after classes, I stumbled into the most surprising adventure. While gawking down an ancient well that stood in an ancient garden belonging to an ancient monastery, a French man asked me if I wanted to look inside—the monastery, not the well. The venerable stone structure encased an even more crumbling bit of architecture that had been built in the 2nd Century. We went through winding ways and there were scores of workmen expertly prying open boxes, unpacking treasures,—porcelains, bronzes, statues, pictures—that belonged to the Louvre, Versailles and other museums. The man who had brought me in was one of the curators and he told me the Mona Lisa had changed hiding places seven times to keep out of the hands of the piratical Germans; the famous painting, the Winged Victory and the Venus de Milo would be restored to their old surroundings within the week. Photographers were taking pictures of the art objects and their hiding places which will be shown to the public. One day the class visited *Les Gobelins Societe* and saw the famous tapestries in the making. It takes unbelievably long to make one. Göering had ordered a super-special number which he will never get now. The weavers insisted he never would have got it! I am going crazy in the perfume shops and in the Flea Market where

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I could buy antique Sevres patchboxes, and early Meissen figurines, if I had the money and could get the darlings home. Like the wine in Normandy these things must come out of the ground. When I came out of the theater the other night the fountains before the Palais Royale were splashing and gay couples were dancing to music coming over loud speakers. The Louvre was decorated in tri-colored panels to celebrate the restoration of her treasures; looking down the Rue de l'Opera the Opera House and Cathedral were glowing with hidden lights. Truly Paris is a city that does something to a woman's heart. I wouldn't have wanted to miss seeing this pride of recovery. Here I am in school and I understand Col. Crawford is *on his way home!* Probably for reassignment. Isn't the Army something! Got to go eat and learn about the past. See you Christmas.

Love;

Marjorie.

By August the character of casualties received at 2nd General changed. Three separate jeep accidents resulted in two deaths, three fractured skulls and one bad abdominal injury; drivers had become used to exacting the impossible of jeeps. A tank convoy headed for a port supposedly had its machine guns unloaded; one G. I. standing up in his tank was shot through the neck and upper arm from a gun on a vehicle behind him. He lost the arm. Rainstorms washed the mud down from hillsides, frequently leaving field mines exposed; one German POW, walking with his group toward their stockade, picked up a mine. Thinking it a dud he twirled it around his head and threw it in some bushes where it exploded, blowing off both his legs. He died later. Even at home tragedy by accident came about; the *Stars and Stripes* gave all the details of the Army bomber that crashed against the Empire State building. News of the atom bomb dropped on Hiroshima caused excitement bordering on frenzy in Nancy. One of the reactions when general fright and consternation subsided: If this were to force a peace treaty with Japan, everyone in 2nd General expected to be homeward bound the next day! Extra clothes and personal possessions were hastily and hopefully packed

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and sent home; many oddments and good woolens (it was hot now) were given to the willing French.

In the meantime seven nurses accompanied by Echo and his mistress flew to Mannheim in a C 47 to be week-end guests of the 27th Fighter Command, which was giving a big dance on Saturday night. It would not be important at this point to tell of another dance were it not that the trip to Germany, brief as it was, revealed first hand something of what had happened across the Rhine—revealed it to those who had been merely on the listening end for some time. The group took off from an airfield in northern Nancy whose buildings, towers and runways had been most competently reduced to rubble; the improvised installations, like the wire runway, was just adequate for loading and unloading. A C 47 is not luxury travel; it was a rough trip which thoroughly subdued the little dog and one or two others. The mountains below looked like hills and the Rhine seemed a puny canal but the fields appeared again to be under cultivation. The plane landed at what once had been Germany's most boasted aeronautics school and airfield. Everything was demolished except a few buildings standing among tall pine trees in a sweet-scented wood. A structure that had been the Luftwaffe Mess Hall had its upper stories shot away, only the ground floor and basement remained still intact. From floor to ceiling and wall to wall, at one end of the Mess Hall proper, was a tile plaque decorated with the dramatic German eagle, an impressive backdrop for Der Führer's struttings. The curtains at the windows were made of parachute silk; the basement had been a air-raid shelter and it housed a nifty bar. Adolph's airmen had been cosy. The colonel of the 27th Fighter Command had a house in which the nurses were billeted comfortably; he lived most of the time in a trailer, declaring he liked it better. The food did not succeed in hiding its dehydrated origin but a string orchestra (German) supplied music at both lunch and dinner. At night Echo was locked up and everyone went to the dance. There were many displaced persons in this area but the officers of the 27th were friendly and nice to the visiting nurses. Sunday morning some of the visitors went swimming in the Rhine while others went to Heidelberg in a jeep. Not knowing Heidelberg Castle was called Schloss Inn, the driver passed it and went right on to the top of the

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mountain where the New Yorkers gazed at the publicized view and wished for the thousandth time with tightening heartstrings they could see the Hudson. Heidelberg was as untouched by war as Oxford had been. There was this difference: In Oxford the people were shabbily dressed and many were downright ill fed; in Heidelberg men, women and children were well, even fashionably, clothed and certainly looked plump with physical well being. The cleanliness was a joy and little girls looked sweet and rather smug in their starched white aprons worn over the Sunday frocks. The return to camp was made through Mannheim. Contrast here. A great city completely destroyed. A few unfortunates had managed to patch up a room or build a lean-to against a remaining wall; they were not yet thin or hungry-looking but where their food was coming from at this time the nurses did not know. Refugees were returning with carts full of possessions, some carrying great packs on their backs. One apartment house of several stories showed a mere shell of front wall on the ledges of which geraniums still bloomed in green flower boxes. This survival of the geraniums recalled Normandy and the nurses thought perhaps the brave flower has a special saint watching over it. The Rhine at Mannheim would not be beautiful even if it were not for the mass of twisted ruins of bridges; it was narrow and necessary to cross it by pontoon bridge. That evening the plane took the visiting nurses back to Nancy.

The Army now started seven-day tours to Switzerland which, like the rest leaves at Nice and Cannes, were designed to furnish diversion to the great body of servicemen who were restlessly awaiting redeployment or orders to go home. Soldiers enthusiastically signed up for the tours and two nurses from 2nd General were among those who were in the first groups to be entertained by the little Republic which had weathered neighboring war fury with no visible damage to herself. Mulhouse was the city in which the prospective travellers gathered and from which the trips started. Transportation was still a game of catch-as-catch-can; it was sit up, wait, squeeze in. Following orders the two nurses on the morning of August 14, went from Nancy to Rheims (north) in order to reach Mulhouse (south)—just why was never made clear; the prescribed itinerary required them the next day to leave Rheims at 6 A. M. in order to pass through

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Nancy again headed in the right direction for destination! It was while they were in Rheims that all the Americans in the city suddenly went crazy. Jeeps full of yelling G. I.s tore through the streets tossing out copies of the *Stars and Stripes* over whose front page in foot-high letters was one word: PEACE! Japan had surrendered. The American soldiers were hysterical with relief, joy, triumph and they started to blow off steam the characteristic way while the French looked on apathetically; after all they had celebrated their peace and they seemed to feel this new capitulation had little to do with them. They cooperated to the extent of making it possible for the Americans to rejoice in a manner G. I.s consider fitting and proper.

There was a choice of four tours into Switzerland, each included stops at different lake and mountain resorts noted for their scenic beauty. During a three-day visit in Vitznau on Lake Lucerne the nurses had an icy swim in the lake and then climbed Mt. Rigi—in a cable car. They considered this mode of ascent more satisfactory, if less sporting, than the old pick and rope technique. The Park Hotel in Vitznau had old folks, footstools, starched white linen curtains embroidered with black cross-stitching, oriental rugs on clean shining floors, and a pianist in tails and white tie who gave concerts every evening. Gracious, sedate living again; perhaps the Swiss people had never stopped living that way. Although there were meatless days, the meals were more abundant (it was Swiss civilian food ration) than anywhere the nurses had eaten in Europe and the Swiss beer was both good and served cold. Under "Instructions and Information" (issued to soldiers taking the Tours) item 14 advised: "Do not make all your purchases at your first stop; the smaller mountain resorts and villages will have much to offer." Each soldier-tourist was allowed to spend $35. The value of the Swiss franc was $4.29 to the dollar and it was forbidden to convert currency inside Switzerland. Servicemens' pin money went for watches, clocks, music boxes, wood carvings and mechanical toys. The *Stars and Stripes* had said that a telephone call to the U.S.A. could be negotiated by service people in Switzerland at a cost of $15. After a terrific ado in all three official languages, false alarms and night watches, one nurse got a call through to her mother in New Jersey; both women spent the precious three minutes in weeping into each other's ears it was voted a great success.

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Information Item No. II: "Raincoats are advised for the trip." They weren't fooling. It rained most of the time the nurses travelled through Interlaken to Gstaad and it still rained en route to Montreaux where Roches-de-Naye was stoically climbed—again the easy way. Swiss cities were spotless and orderly; the visiting soldiers seemed a little restless as if the change from the debris and chaos of Germany and France was too sudden and they found difficulty in adjusting to a calmer tempo. Nevertheless the Tours were popular and other nurses and doctors of the 2nd General group took advantage of the opportunity to enjoy Switzerland but unfortunately their vacations were interrupted by being recalled. Orders came for the Unit to move.

2nd General Hospital was officially closed August 26, 1945. With a census of approximately 1000 it was turned over to another General Hospital fresh from the States. To the veterans it seemed anticlimatic to move just down the street! All French casernes are desolate places but this one, though appallingly dirty, was large and had been neither bombed nor shelled. The doctors and other officers were billeted on the first and second floors; the nurses on the third. When 55 nurses from other outfits scheduled to go home were added to the 2nd General group, the fourth floor was put into use. Climb those stairs sisters! If an employee of a colossal department store were to be placed in its Information booth without knowing any of the answers, she would feel as groggy at the end of the day as the Chief Nurse did the day after moving into the new quarters. 155 nurses wanted to know:

"Nurses who have been over here only one and a half years are getting home; how come?" "Are we to fly or go by boat?" "What shall I pack in my trunk and what shall I put in my bedding roll and will we have them with us?" "Shall I cable my folks and where shall I tell them to meet me?" "If I go on leave do you think the Unit will move while I am gone?" "How are you going to get Echo home?" "Will we have to wear fatigues again?" "They say there are thousands of nurses in the deployment camps to go home before they get to us." "Will we go together or will it be by points?" "If I sign that I do not want to join the Regular Army, can I change

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my mind when I get home?" "Can I go to Paris for just one more night?" "Can I go to Frankfurt to see a friend over the week-end?"

On September 7, an all-nurse train started from Verdun with 400 homeward-bound passengers. Dressed in fatigues (there was a howl about this but before the trip was over they were glad of it) 200 more nurses waited two hours in the scorching sun on a railroad siding at Nancy for this train. There was sky-larking and high-jinks. When the train finally pulled in and finally pulled out again, the outside of all the cars bore huge chalk signs; the girls gave rein to emotional sentiments. One of the cars assigned to 2nd General nurses read: COLONEL CRAWFORD'S PAMPERED PETS. It was a three-day ride to Marseilles sitting up which took some of the lark out of them; the cramped positions, interminable waits, dirt and smell were bearable only because of the mirage ahead—home. The New Yorkers told each other the only thing they wanted was to sail into New York harbor and give the Statue of Liberty their love and kisses. Echo was the best behaved of all the travellers but the nervous little dog, recently surviving distemper by virtue of sulphanilamide and "tender loving care", trembled and shivered with the upheavel and uncertainty that had come into his world. He had his credentials, certificate of inoculation and good health, in case of trouble but it is likely they were more comfort to his mistress than to him.

In Marseilles more than 2000 nurses were gathered in a Hospital Center, more than half of them, including those which arrived from Nancy, were housed in the 7th Convalescent Hospital which stood on a hill. There were showers and beds with sheets, a phenomenon which still made a deep impression. There was a great scrubbing and cleaning up after arrival and many fatigues were lifted by thumb and forefinger and dropped into waste receptacles as something too repulsive ever to be coped with again. Recreational facilities (there are those who insist the washing machines be included) were ping-pong, archery, and swimming in a pool. Because Americans have a queer way of soothing nerves a loudspeaker blared raucous music all day, often in losing competition with the chatter of 2000 women, all demanding information. The doctors had not done so well; they, as well as the enlisted men, were billeted in tents on a dirt plain. The scuffling of thousands of feet stirred the dust until it hung in smother-

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ing clouds over the city, rasping throats and reddening eyes. Marseilles was dotted with ruined areas and all of the city was crowded and begrimed but it was a port and from it would sail ships for home. Or so it was rumored. Nurses stood around, waited, picked up things and put them down again, wearing far-off expressions. As days passed and nothing happened a few relaxed and went swimming in the blue Mediterranean, avoiding barbed-wire and pink jelly fish and acquiring an expensive looking tan which was going to make the home folks say to any tales of woe and hardship—"Oh yeah?"

Another pleasurable recollection of Marseilles will be the chateau on another hilltop which had been converted into a Nurses' Club; in the evening there was dancing in the moonlight on the terrace which overlooked the sea. German POWs serviced the club efficiently, quietly and politely. This cannot be said of the POWs who waited on the Nurses' Mess. These prisoners directed the seating with insolently shouted orders and served the meals with such surly impertinence it reached a degree that was a scandal; either the officer in charge was incapable of exercising discipline or, disgruntled, was supremely indifferent to the circumstances. Had not the nurses been so passionately determined that nothing, nothing at all, was to interfere with getting home, charges would have been submitted but everyone knew this would mean interminable delay while inquiry was under way. The behavior of the POWs was borne with tight lips. But the memory of it rankles.

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Home Again

LEAVING Marseilles on October 3rd, the General Meigs carried 8000 troops on that homeward-bound trip. It cannot be said there were no plans made for women on this ship! Either the captain was a New Englander with an ingrained sense of what was "right and fitting", or he belonged to the old school of seamen who knew a woman on board brought bad luck, or perhaps he was just bitter about the sex generally and felt that if you had them all in one place you could keep your eye on them. The 155 nurses (18 to a cabin) were segregated to special quarters, ate at their own mess, sprawled on their own section of sun-grilled iron deck where they pointed their sun-burned noses, smeared with cold cream, toward home. It was forbidden even to hold converse with their own or any other male officers and M.P.s were posted at strategic approaches to their convent quarters on the assumption, one supposes, that M.P.s weren't men. Several hours after sailing a nurse scout came down into the Chief Nurse's stifling cabin and said—"You can let Echo out Petie; there are at least five dogs running all about the decks." Echo was still limp having been throughly knocked out with sleeping pills to make him appear to be part of an overcoat thrown over an arm! The well-trained and fastidious little dog was the only completely unhappy passenger on that voyage; he spent the nine days in futile search for a tree that wasn't there.

It was a calm and peaceful crossing though "boat drill" was practised every day and for some the alarm stirred recollections of panic and horror they were trying to forget. In a real emergency the tempo might have been stepped up but in practice on the General Meigs it took twenty minutes to man and launch the life boats. The nurses were ordered to stay in their quarters until summoned to the decks; as they waited, the girls of the Harvard unit (attached to 2nd General for homeward trip) who had survived a torpedoing in 1942 said grimly,—"Our ship sank in three minutes; we'd be goners by now!" It was a bitter disappointment to the New Yorkers on board to hear that the ship was headed for Hampton Roads, Va. No Statue of Liberty. No love and kisses. A strike of longshoremen in New York harbor made this necessary and the strikers came in for little sympathy.

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The landing was made on October 12th, "just like Columbus." Male officers were first down the gangplank followed by the nurses in Class A uniforms; fatigues, battle dress, and combat suits had been rolled tightly for the last time in the bedding rolls. It seemed unbelievable. There was no band but the inevitable loud-speaker blared a "Welcome Home." A WAC sergeant stood at the end of the gangplank and gave an individual nod and "Welcome Home" to each debarking soldier; it must have been a dizzying assignment. From the gangplank there was a long, fenced-in runway along the sides of which were gathered crowds of people; Red Cross committees of welcome, representatives of civic groups and perhaps just private, interested citizens. To their surprise the nurses were given a hand and there were calls—"Well done, girls! Welcome Home!" It was heartwarming; this was the good old U.S.A. As the Chief Nurse (loaded with baggage as everyone was) staggered down the gangplank and along the walk there were pointings and whoops of laughter from the spectators. Wincing at the recollection of stares from the phlegmatic English en route to the marshalling area from Tidworth and the pity of the Parisiennes who thought them poor refugees as they crossed Paris, she turned to an officer beside her.

"Well, what's so funny this time?"

"Take a look over your left arm, Major."

The sleeping pills had not worked; the pointed nose and inquisitive eyes of the Revigny retriever had found an opening in the zippered pocket and Echo was taking his first delighted sniff at the land of the free and the home of the brave. After that he was released from his fugitive environment and allowed to walk on a leader. At the end of the runway all were directed into trains, good old American trains with one door and no complications. Red Cross workers served a pint of fresh, cool milk to each officer, nurse and enlisted man, including Echo; all drank thirstily with gurgles of appreciation and demands for more, which were refused with the maternal injunction that so much fresh milk would not be good for them. The train passed through pine woods, fields of stacked corn and slid past an occasional factory whose parking lots were black with the vehicles that brought men to work.

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"Automobiles! Look at those cars!" Faces crowded at the train windows to see the wonderous sight.

It took less than an hour to reach Camp Patrick Henry where, on detraining, the nurses with all their baggage were ordered into buses, alphabetically, by the insistence of Col. Rousselot. It was a Resumption of the Incomprehensible. Let no one think he was free —yet. The nurses were driven one half block to the entrance of an Auditorium; baggage was piled on the outside after which an address of welcome was delivered to them on the inside. This was the parting of the ways for the men and women of the Unit; officers and enlisted men were marched off to one part of the camp and the nurses were taken in charge by a sergeant of the WAC. It did not make sense to resume the burden of luggage and be walked a mile and a half after the hocus-pocus of an alphabetical ride for several hundred feet, but the guide kept saying encouragingly, "Just a little further; just a little bit further." Destination was a huge Mess Hall where the official "Welcome Home" meal was served. And what a meal! Regardless of the time of day, it was dinner and bountiful; steak, real potatoes, green peas, onions, lettuce and tomato salad, white bread and all the real butter one could eat, cake, pie, ice cream and coffee. After this clambake, barracks were indicated with a place to park the duffle; time to powder the old nose would have been welcomed too! But not yet. Army routine had another lecture up its sleeve and this one really brought down the house. Subject: How to Behave in America. With emphasis on deportment with the opposite sex. After having travelled on land and sea with men, bivouaced with them, nursed and cared for them when they were wounded, watched them die, and after having worked with them for three and a half years, the advice sounded ludicrous, anti-climatic. Probably the WAC sergeant whose unfortunate duty it was to substitute for an officer who was ill, never before or since evoked such spontaneous laughter or hysterical bursts of derision. Apologizing afterward, the Chief Nurse explained something of what the nurses had been through and why in view of that the admonitory lecture had sounded absurd. The sergeant was a surprisingly understanding person and said:

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En Route: Nancy to Marseilles.

Waiting for the Engineer.

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Awaiting Transportation.

Stopover for Chow Along the Route.

French Children Selling Vegetables en Route.

Waiting for the Engineer.

Echo Shares the Common Fate: Hurry-Up-and-Wait.

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V-E Day was followed by many "Just Married" signs.

War Over—
Relaxing on the Riviera.

Relaxing in Marseilles.

The Pier at Marseilles—
General Meigs, Troopship.

Col. Crawford's Pampered Pets Homeward Bound.

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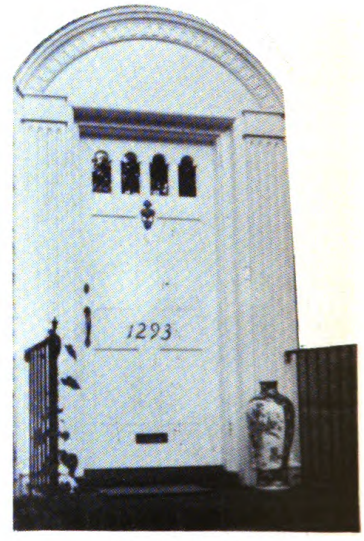
Find Echo.

"All Aboard"

He Made It!

Norfolk, Va.—Milk M-um!



Home Again.

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"The men who come through here are never-ceasing in their praise of what the nurses did for them overseas; I guess the girls are entitled to a laugh where they can get it."

Barracks at last! But not quite to rest; there were relatives to be advised. Queue up! Telephone numbers were given to an operator and there ensued a wait with what must have been many mixed emotions and, possibly, apprehensions. Making contacts was not so bad the first night but the next day, when another ship came in, the telephone queue stretched out the length of three city blocks. The remarks of the G. I.s coming out of the booths were intriguing enough to help pass the time agreeably for those waiting their turn. Lt. Florence West emerged from a booth.

"Oh boy! My mother is making mayonnaise—and she says to hurry!"

One enlisted man said disgustedly; "Been waiting three years to hear my wife's voice, and who do I get? My mother-in-law!"

Lt. Loulie Hampton, as southern as sweet potato pie, came from a booth looking baffled.

"Didn't you get your mother?" she was asked. The nurses were much interested in each other.

"Oh yes," reassured Loulie, and added; "but she's so southern, I couldn't understand her! She kept saying—'Thiz Miz Ampton'!"

A call was put through to Presbyterian Hospital and an utterly gratifying exchange of greetings took place. It was wonderful to be home!

POWs waited on the Nurses' Mess in Camp Patrick Henry and they were quiet and agreeable; one nurse was surprised to recognize a prisoner who had been on her ward in the tent hospital at Normandy. Speaking English well now, he told her he was glad to see 2nd General nurses and doctors home safe; he rolled up the leg of his fatigues and showed her how beautifully a serious leg wound had healed because of the excellent treatment and care he had received.

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That night Col. Rousselot told Major Peto that as of mid-night October 12, 1945, 2nd General Hospital was dissolved. During the next two days nurses that had been added to the Unit for the trip home were sent to separation centers nearest their homes for demobilization. On October 14 the main body of the nurses, a large percentage of whom had been with the Unit from its activation, suffered yet another interminable railroad journey; the train stopped frequently for long waits and the engineer, unlike his French counterpart, indulged in no entertaining irregularities, just sat and waited for a signal—like a slave. It took from 9 A. M. to 9 P. M. to travel from Camp Patrick Henry, Virginia, to Camp Dix, New Jersey.

Camp of Utter Confusion! Where the process of getting discharged reduced hard-boiled veterans to frustrated, gibbering pulp. Eyeing the nurses with suspicion and dismay the billeting officer said, "Women were not expected!" After three and a half years! Why was the Army always surprised to find women on its hands? In the end it became apparent that 105 nurses, plus duffle and a tired dog tied to a bedding roll, could not stand in the camp's streets all night and the third floor of a men's barracks (the other two floors occupied) finally and following much contradictory palaver, was made available. How scandalized the Captain of the General Meigs would have been!

The actual processing went fast enough but waiting for turns took two or three days and at the end of each day, for those whose names had not been called, there was the same scramble to find a place to sleep. The billeting officer tore his hair when cornered the second night and asked about billets for the remnant of 2nd General nurses.

"Major Peto, why don't you send your nurses home and tell them to come back for the processing?"

"We aren't all from New York; some live in Maine, in Virginia, in Boston. Why can't we sleep where we did last night?"

"That space is being reserved for troops from overseas!"

"Where do you think we come from?" came the indignant protest but the officer wasn't listening; other impassioned questioners

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were closing in and when last seen he was going down for the third time. A few of the nurses solved the problem by securing rooms in the hotel of a nearby town; others scurried cannily back to the beds they had occupied the night before and climbed in; after all, occupation is fairly conclusive—the Army should know.

The Great Homecoming, so ardently prayed for, is over. Time passes so swiftly; events are forgotten so easily. No nurse who was attached to the 2nd General Hospital Unit has been heard to regret her enlistment; many feel the experience, aside from the satisfaction of having performed a patriotic and humanitarian duty, has enriched her life and broadened her perspective. Many of the nurses have married since their return and they, as well as the ones who married during their service, are now busy raising their families. All expect to live to be able to say to their politely tolerant grandchildren—

"Now, when I was overseas in World War II—What? Must you go so soon?"

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The Feminine Personnel of the 2nd General Hospital

List of Nurses, Dietitians, Physical Therapists, Dental Hygienists, and American Red Cross Workers assigned to LIFE BOATS on the Duchess of Bedford.

LIFE BOAT NO. 6

*Martin, Gertrude
McMullan, Emily
*Mearns, Margaret
Mutch, J. Ada M.
*Mosser, Willetta
*Conner, Joyce
*McMullan, Dorothy
*Hallock, Mildred
Peters, Margaret
*Smith, Elizabeth
*Smith, E. Virginia
*Dickensheets, Ruth

LIFE BOAT NO. 8

*Renski, Caroline
*Biddle, Jean
*Robinson, Dorothy
*West, Florence
*Heller, Marie
*Chase, Eleanor
*Willey, Ruth
Whitfield, Marion
*Walsh, Clarrissa
*Smith, Jean
Johnson, Vera
*Hampton, Loulie
*Schweitzer, Emily

LIFE BOAT NO. 10

*Jordan, Lydia
*Gough, Constance
*Keefer, Geraldine
Carnell, M. (D.H.)
Staten, Virginia
Harman, T. (Diet.)
Webster, Norine
*Rapp, Elizabeth
*Darling, Clara
*Kauffman, Ella
*Swingle, Constance (Diet.)
*Wilks, Helen (Diet.)
*Merrill, Marie (P.T.A.)
Randall, Virginia (P.T.A.)
*Cone, Doris

LIFE BOAT NO. 12

Farrington, Florence
Root, Anna
Bestman, Florence
*Whitney, Margaret
*Hall, Dorothy
Beet, Alice
*Brundage, Mary
Forbush, Ina
*Baker, Elizabeth
Johnson, Sybil

LIFE BOAT NO. 14

*Aiken, Martha
Davis, Katherine
*Schwartz, Tova (PTA)
*Fisher, Elizabeth
Cadwell, Maude
*McBrien, Ruth
*Castille, Mercedes
Finn, Margaret
*Edwards, Katherine
Walther, Joyce

LIFE BOAT NO. 5

*Delafield, Julia
*Hogan, Aileen
Gallagher, Dorothy
*Schroeder, Gladys
*Elwood, Evelyn
*Danielsen, Edna
Cuerier, Frances
*Hastings, Dorothy
Todd, Arnot
Armstrong, Margaret
*Young, Madeleine
*Head, Josephine

LIFE BOAT NO. 7

*Van Horn, Mary Ellen
*Waldvogel, Naomi
*Swayze, Gladys
*Walker, Helen
*Barrett, Rose
*Peto, Marjorie
*Strambi, Angela
*Rickman, Marie
*Purnell, Carrie
*King, Elizabeth
*Hagner, Dorothy
*Chanda, Mary

LIFE BOAT NO. 9

Swallen, Mary
*Delaney, Mary Ann
Quackenbush, Mildred
*Reichling, Dorothy
*Hopkins, Janet
*Bedard, Evelyn
*Smith, Laura
*Knowles, Bernice
Sandmann, Ilse
*David, Janis
*Reid, Margaret
*Wohlfarth, Edna

LIFE BOAT NO. 11

*Reeves, Katherine
*Lundin, Alice
*Ives, Katharine
Cordes, Margaret
Batchelder, Clara
Bickel, Blanche
*Racz, Margaret
Scott, Haidee ARC
Collins, Shirley ARC
Witt, Mary ARC
Hart, Josha ARC
Brugger, Mary Ann ARC

LIFE BOAT NO. 15

*Provost, Matilda
*Antetomaso, Antoinette
*Owen, Ruth
*Johnsen, Esther
*Ives, Charlotte
*Rush, Reba
*Kent, Louisa
*Everett, Ann
Page, Ruth

Eighty-One with the Unit from the Duchess Days to V-E Day.

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NURSES AND ARC WORKERS
WHO JOINED THE UNIT OVERSEAS

Adams, Ann
Adams, Erie
Bivens, Wilma
Burkhardt, Gladys—ARC
Burke, Marie
Erlanger, Margaret—ARC
Hassler, Kathryn
Henderson, Caroline
Jervis, Margaret
Johnson, Eleanor
Leen, Evelyn
Lambert, Anita
Malony, Helen
Maculics, Ann
McCallum, Irene
*Napier, Jean—ARC
*Polchak, Ann
Sanders, Cecelia
*Shea, Mary
Stewart, Mildred—ARC
Scherman, Frances
Taylor, Ardra
*Tembrock, Eva
Wiltsie, Gladys

** With the Unit from Oxford to V-E Day.*

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WOMEN WERE NOT EXPECTED

By

MARJORIE PETO

Lt. Col. A. N. [redacted]

"People live through harrowing ex- periences and say, 'I'll never laugh at that!' Then, in a day, a month, a year, it becomes a funny story."

"In the first bivouac area . . . women were not expected and no provision for their accommodation had been made." Three and one-half years later in Ft. Dix,—ditto.

"There was an obligato of rain throughout . . ."

"When the siren screamed at 3 A. M. sleepy people responded on the double."

"American nurses in the British Isles got the works in a Battle School for nurses . . . stood inspection, had foot drill, fought fires, crossed rivers on ropes strung high above water, learned about booby traps and poisonous gases."

"Strictly G. I. . . . no more of those nice, form-fitting sweaters."

"2nd General became a paragon hospital subject to exhaustive inspections. 'Soldier: Are they taking good care of you?' "

"Nurses realized they were taking part in something really big, moving side by side with a formidable display of infantry and artillery."

"There was not a cubic foot of sky in which something was not coming apart."

"Soldiers called losing an arm or a leg a 'million-dollar wound' because it would get them home."

"We are convinced there was no place like 2nd General."

"Then it happened. VICTORY! FINI! KAPUT!"

* * *

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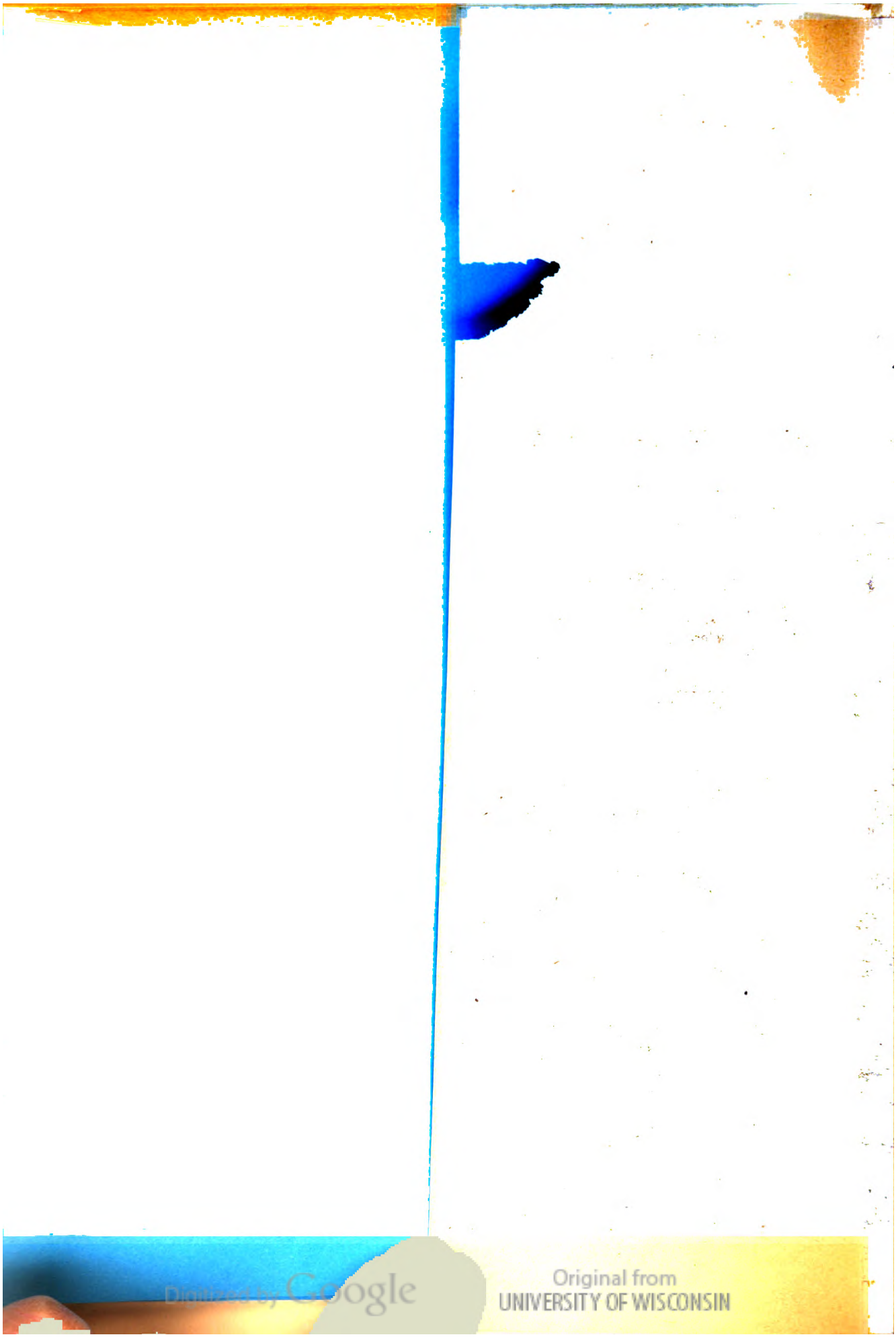
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THE author of WOMEN WERE NOT EXPECTED is a graduate of Teachers College, Columbia University and of Presbyterian Hospital, New York City. During World War II she was Chief Nurse of the 2nd General Hospital, U. S. Army. From 1st Lieutenant she was promoted through the successive ranks to Lt. Colonel A. N. C., and was awarded the Bronze Star.

Her citation reads in part:
". . . for meritorious service in connection with military operations against an enemy of the United States. . . . Her skill in organization and administration of the nursing staff was instrumental in much alleviation of suffering and undoubted saving of life in members of the United States and Allied Military forces."

Miss Peto is now Assistant Professor of Nursing, Columbia University Presbyterian Hospital School of Nursing; also Assistant Director of Nursing, Babies Hospital. To her fellow members of the wartime nursing group she was: "Petie".

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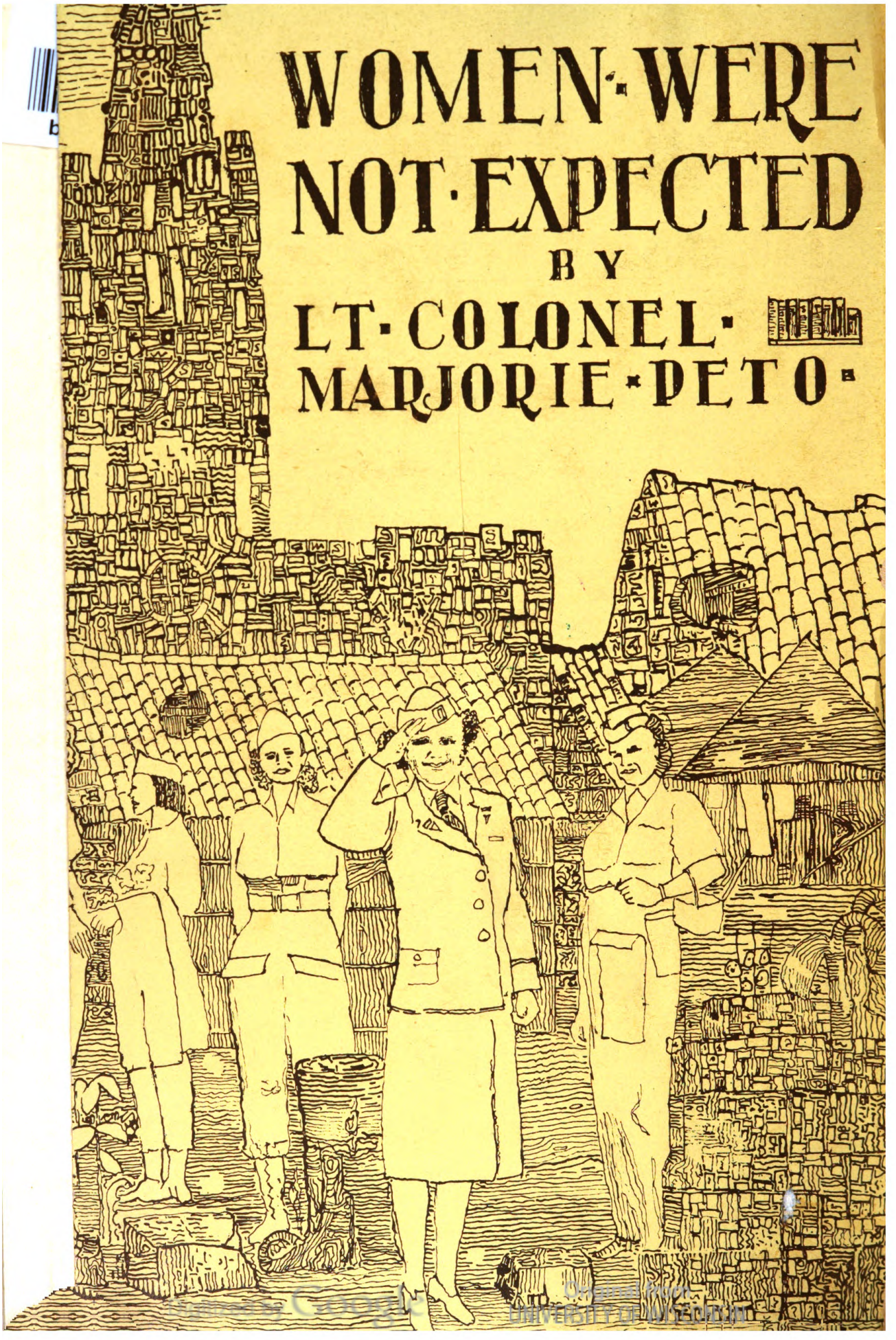
WOMEN·WERE NOT·EXPECTED

BY

LT·COLONEL· MARJORIE·PETO·



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